

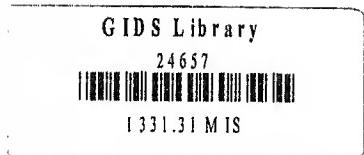
A Study on child labour in carpet industry Mirzapur

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G. P. MISHRA

P. N. PANDE



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STUDY ON CHILD LABOUR IN CARPET INDUSTRY
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In transitional societies man regards child as an asset created by God and child use as a part of his family-cum-social order. But in a modern developed society, the child is perceived as a product of human reproductive process. Hence child development is conceived as an essential component of human resource development. That is why in the modern society, the child is not used as labour and all care is taken for the development of child as a unit of investment for his/her proper education and health with a view to developing him/her as human capital. As a result, the use of child as labour till the age of 14 to 18 years does not prevail in a modern society.

In a transitional society, the case of child labour is also regarded as an economic practice because of the persistence of tradition-bound occupations and occupational immobility. But this society is not free from the influence of modern scientific outlook for development prevailing in the modern world and so the use of child labour is also regarded as a social evil. If this society has democratic form of the government, the use of child labour as a social evil gets more currency in such society. Hence both, the case of child labour as an economic practice and as a social evil co-exist simultaneously in a traditional society. The

use of child labour is in fact regarded as social evil because of the abuse of child labour on a large scale.

Briefly speaking, the use and abuse of child labour is the characteristic of transitional societies which enfold multi-class based social structures and a complex of traditional and pre-capitalist production relations operating under the shadow of the dominant bourgeois ideology and mode of exploitation. This also holds true in respect of Indian society wherein the multi-class social structures exist and a complex of traditional and pre-capitalist production relations operate; as result of which, both the use and abuse of child labour persist simultaneously, despite having a number of legislative and administrative measures to curb the use and abuse of child labour.

I.1 Concept and Theoretical Formulations of Child Labour

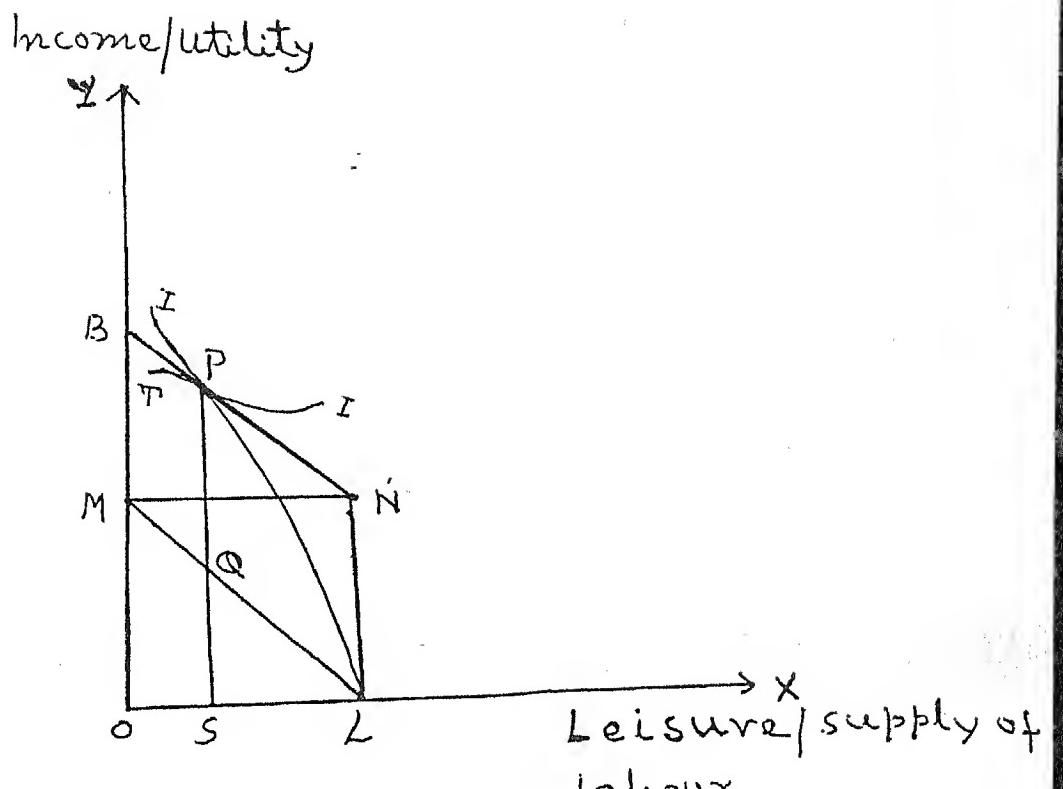
The concept of child labour stands for the participation of children (below 14 years age) in labour force for paid or unpaid work. The use of child labour is wide spread in most of the developing (or third world) countries of the world. One among them is India where the concentration of child labour is the highest in the world. The use of child labour assumes the character of a social problem in as much as it hinders assets or distorts the natural growth processes and prevents the child from attending his full-blown manhood.

But the irony of the fact is that the supply of child labour in the labour market is a socio-economic reality in India and so the use and abuse of child labour in different industrial activities and occupations.

Why the child labour is supplied in the labour market is the main question to be investigated in the context of the present socio-economic situation prevailing in the country. The neo-classical theory of child labour explains that the household or family supplies child labour in order to maximise its current income from the employment of child labour as a preference to the income expected from that employment in future after the schooling of its children. In other words, the rational behaviour of the household has a scale of preference between the use of its child labour as the source of family income and leisure or sacrifice (which is also a cost) that the family has to incur due to the schooling of children. That is why the household supplies child labour for wage income in the labour market.

Let us explain the above with the help of Hicksian indifference analysis.

Diagram (A)² is constructed on the assumption that the rational behaviour of the head of a given household is concerned with whether he should send his children for work in the labour market for wage income in order to maximise his income utility or send them for schooling (i.e. he should prefer leisure to income for maximising income/utility).



Diagram(a)

Suppose that the head of the family decides to send his children for work as he wants to maximise present income or utility instead of sending them to school because of high opportunity cost involved in choosing schooling or leisure for them. In that case, how he behaves and supplies his child labour is demonstrated in the above diagram.

The vertical axis measures income and utility and the horizontal axis leisure. Hence the labour supply is measured as OL minus leisure. Let us assume that LT is income possibility curve, and ML is given income leisure (or cost) line. This is drawn on the assumption that the employment of child labour, by foregoing leisure, will cause such income possibility curve. If the head of the family, with a given scale of preference, decides to supply LS child labour; then he remains at point P where his indifference curve, II is tangent to the income possibility curve, LT . In that case, he derives PQ (i.e. $PS - QS$) income and he maximises his utility by supplying child labour in the labour market, as BN is parallel to ML . In this way, the neo-classical formulation of child labour use explains why the households supply child labour for work in the labour market.

The other neo-classical formulations of child labour use by Baker-Lewis,³ Dandekar,⁴ Willis⁵ and Schultz⁶ which also assume "household" as an optimising and rational decision-making unit, depict children as both consumption and investment goods. Their formulations also analyse the determinants of fertility in terms of the relative utilities

of children and other goods and services, with children involving the investment of time and income.⁷ Thus such neo-classical approach explains that the head of the family (or parents) has to decide whether he wants to maximise the present income over the future income from children which involves investment of time and income in educating the children. In fact, many of the households in a developing country like India rationally decide for the present income rather than for the future income which involves high opportunity cost of schooling and investment of time and income in going for the future income. Moreover, the life expectancy of children is also another factor to decide for maximising the present income over the future income. That is why these neo-classicals explain that the households with an objective to maximise present income, supply their children for the use of their labour for work in the labour market and so there is positive relationship between the income from children and their fertility rate. A number of demographic studies on child labour and fertility made in the context of a number of developing countries (such as by Kasarda,⁸ Schultz,⁹ De Vanzo,¹⁰ Manver-Ratzak-Schultz,¹¹ Harman,¹² Cain,¹³ Caldwell,¹⁴ and De Tray¹⁵, etc.) show the existence of positive relationship between child labour as a part of labour force and high fertility rate there. The rationale behind all such studies lies in the neo-classical assumption that the rational behaviour of the parents to optimise present income rather future income, which involves

high opportunity cost and investment of time and income with given life expectancy, makes their children enter into labour force and make them decide for more children in the family.

But this micro approach of the neo-classicals fails to comprehend the socio-economic structures of production and distribution in which the households of the so-called neo-classical rational behaviour are reproduced and compelled to supply their child labour for wage income in the labour market.

*Child employment not only reflects economic processes but also depends on normative attitudes towards children in society. The culturally determined roles and functions of children, the values by which the activities of children are judged, and the nature of socialisation processes.¹⁶ Therefore, the exponents of the socialisation theory of child labour use (such as Oppong,¹⁷ Schildkrout¹⁸, and Mayer¹⁹) explain that the socio-cultural framework and the social institutions belonging to the agriculture dominated agrarian and peasant societies emit such socio-economic processes whereby the use of child labour is socialised as an integral part of family-oriented social and institutional order. But a historical analysis of the socialisation approach of child labour does not throw light on why the socio-economic processes corresponding to given socio-economic structures of production and distribution operate and produce child labour in developing countries.

Some of the scholars attribute to the segmentation of labour market and the co-existence of informal (or unorganised sector) with formal (or organised) sector for the creation of such employment conditions and wages in which many households supply child labour for wages in the labour market. The segmentation of labour market into 'sub-markets' is assumed to take place due to emergence and growth of capitalist relations of production because of the differentiation of peasantry and growing proletarianisation of marginal and small farmers and the artisans. In their papers, Kerr²⁰ and Gordon-Edwards²¹ have shown how increasing proletarianisation associated with the growth of labour market leads to segmentation of labour force into 'sub-markets with different employment conditions and wages. The segmentation of labour market is taken to be the basic characteristics of a developing economy undergoing a transitional process of capitalist development wherein the capitalist relations of production emerge and grow in certain activities and areas. In that case, the pre-capitalist production relations of certain varieties also co-exist and enfold such employment conditions and wages wherein many households have to supply their family and child labour for subsistence. The prevalence of such production conditions also keeps the wage rate from rising in the economy because of an excess supply of labour.

The existence of sectoral dualism in terms of formal and informal sector (i.e. organised and unorganised sector) is

held to be another theoretical formulation of child labour use. It is said that a large part of the developing economy is informal or unorganised and so the households supply their family and child labour either for paid or unpaid work. Hence the existence of sectoral dualism at techno-economic organisational level of production and distribution, being the characteristic of the economy like India, is responsible for the supply of child labour in the labour market.

Why the labour market is segmented and why the sectoral dichotomies like the informal/formal sector or unorganised/organised sector exist in a developing economy remains unexplained in such theoretical formulations of child labour. They are absolutely inadequate for understanding the supply of labour with a given capital that functions at a particular point of time. In fact, the classical political economists sorted out these questions while studying the growth of industrial capital. For instance, Marx demonstrated that growing "organised" capital maintains three types of relative surplus population, namely "floating", "latent" and "stagnant". The "floating" population refers to those workers who perform casual work, shuttling between rural and urban areas. The "latent" relative population consists of those workers who can be easily released from agriculture due to their precarious disguised existence. The "stagnant" relative population consists of those workers who belong to domestic industry and constitute a major part of the informal sector in the "manufacturing" industry.

Therefore, the so-called unorganised or informal sector is nothing but an ending reservoir of the relative surplus labour, characterised as 'floating', 'latent' and "stagnant" by Marx. Therefore, the Marxian theory of labour process is supposed to present a quite useful understanding for the question of why child labour is supplied for work in the labour market. Marx's analysis of labour process²² (which is constituted of three elements : the personal activity of man, i.e. work itself; the subject of that work, i.e. raw material; and the instruments of labour) shows that the nature of labour process undergoes transformation as capitalism passes through various forms of production, i.e. cooperation, manufacture and factory, i.e. mechino-facture. The nature of labour process in the unorganised or informal sector is that the manufacturing form of production exists and functions at the household level under the control of merchant capital interwoven with industrial capital. As a result, in such sector, comprising of cottage based or domestic industries, the households supply their family and child labour for paid or unpaid work in the labour market. In other words, industrial capital has not still covered the entire gamut of social production leading to generalised commodity production because labour is not completely separated from the means of production but is subsumed under merchant capital, having interwoven with industrial capital.

On the basis of his studies on the development of capitalism in Russia, Lenin explained the character of

manufacture : "under manufacture, merchant's capital was combined with industrial capital. It was interwoven with it in the most diverse ways and the dependence of operatives on the capitalist assumed a host of forms and shades, ranging from work for hire in another person's workshop to work at home for a 'master' and, finally, to dependence in the purchase of raw material or in the sale of the product. At the same time, there always remained a large number of quasi-independent producers under manufacture".²³ This also throws light on the nature of labour process in the merchant capital dominated manufacturing form of production at household level, having tied to the factory form of production. His analysis of the multi-structural system in the context of Russia²⁴ shows how the five socio-economic structures, i.e., patriarchal (mostly peasant farming); small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain); private capitalism with the emergence of small private capital; and socialism; existed in Russia. Each structure has its own forms and relations of production corresponding to its own labour process. The forms and relations of production corresponding to these five structures are antagonistic to each other. But the emergence of small private capital along with state capitalism gets interwoven with merchant capital which dominates the manufacturing form of production and forms a naked form of capitalist exploitation in which the use of women and child labour becomes the rule, the working conditions most insanitary. All this leads to the 'sweating' system". If

such socio-economic system continues to exist, the merchant dominated manufacturing form of production persists and the households, which supply labour, are reproduced in every year.

In fact, the character of state capitalism in association with private industrial capital-cum-merchant capital in the country like India is responsible for the reproduction of many households to supply their family and child labour leading to a naked form of exploitation of such labour which is incorporated into tangible production and the supply of which is extracted by the merchants for realising its exchange value in the market. The glass industry in Ferozabad and the carpet industry in Mirzapur are typical examples in the Indian case where the household form of production is tied upto the factory form of production through merchant capital in regard to the glass industry and merchant dominated manufacturing form of production at the household level with respect to carpet industry in particular.

I.2 Popular Causal Explanation

Children are required to seek employment either to supplement the income of their families or to have a gainful employment in the absence of schooling facilities. The most important cause of child labour in India is wide-spread poverty. Nearly one-third of India's population subsists

below the poverty line. Because of poverty, the parents want their children to fend for themselves as soon as they can, if not generate enough surplus to support the family. The poor parents who have not sufficient income are in need of the earnings from their children. The parents are forced to send their children in the labour market for wage income. The problem of child labour is inter-related to the problem of low wages of adult workers. The low level of wages of adult workers compells them to send their children for some work in return of some wages. As a result, the employer also takes benefit of their weakness by providing work to their children at low wages. In some cases, children seek work because of their adult wage earners are either unemployed or under-employed. Large families with comparatively less income can not give shelter to their children as well as they are unable to provide basic amenities to them. Parents are compelled to send their children to take up wage/quasi-wage employment to the detriment of their health, education and general well-being, mainly due to poor economic conditions and to certain social factors. Absence of any provision for free education is also an important cause of child labour. Compulsory education has no meaning unless the parents are able to meet out the expenditure on education. Similarly, the extremely poor families can not send their children to schools even if there are provisions of free and compulsory education. It appears that economic factor is a crucial factor associated with child labour problem. Due to ignorance and illiteracy, the parents do not understand the future career and the

development of their children. They prefer to sending their children to seek out employment rather than to educate them. The report of Committee on Child Labour also mentioned that "economic compulsions weighed heavily on the consciousness of poor parents that they would not mind colluding with child's employer in violating the law and putting the child under risks in inhuman exploitations. Poverty and child labour thus always beget each other and tend to reinforce themselves in families and communities. Because of their poverty, parents can not make any investment in their child's development, they are also reluctant even to support them. They want their children to fend themselves as early as possible, much better, if they become as source of income to the family.²⁵

The main external force pulling children towards child labour is rooted in the employers' insatiable desire to maximise profit. Child Labour is cheap, docile and not entitled to the benefits which the counterpart adult labour is entitled to. Children have less developed ego and status consciousness. In some cases, children are more active, agile and quick and feel less tired in certain works.

Historically, the institution of child worker has existed since time immemorial. Children have been helping and working with their parents and with their elders. In India, children have been gaining skills and learning their traditional family crafts without any formal training

outside. Some of the important child labour intensive activities in which children are employed include, farming, forestry, animal keeping, goat and sheep rearing, cooking, beedi making, slate industry, match industry, brace industry, lock industry, coir industry, glass industry, diamond industry, incense making, paper bag industry, gem polishing, embroidery, newspaper selling, garment making, carpet weaving and other works.

I.3 Magnitude and Legal Perception of Child Labour

The problem of child labour, being a universal phenomenon, has been engaging the attention of social scientists, trade unions, other social reformers and the government for many decades in our country. Among the countries for which figures have been supplied by the International Labour Organisation, it is found that India has the highest number of children who are employed. During 1975, Asia had the largest share of working children (40 millions) and of these 29 millions of children were at work in South Asia alone. Of the total number of child workers in the work during 1975, nearly one-third were in India alone. The magnitude of the problem of child labour varies widely from country to country. According to ILO estimates, the number of working children in 1980 stood at 80 millions and that is 18 per cent of children in the age group of 10-14 years were working. This ratio for developing countries was found to be over 21 per cent. The ILO statistics on child

labour cover only children between the age group of 10-14 years. Actually, working children under 10 years of age too constitute a significant proportion of the work-force in many developing countries. In India children are found working even in the early age of 5-6 years in different sectors of the economy.

India's population as per 1971 Census was 548.2 million. Of this 230.3 million (42.03 per cent) were children in the age group of 0-14 years. Out of 230.3 millions children in India 10.74 millions were enumerated as workers, registering 4.66 per cent of the total population in 1971. According to 1981 Census, there were 13.59 millions working children in India. Among the total workers in India, the child labour were 5 per cent in the main workers and 11 per cent in the marginal workers in 1981. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, child labour constituted 4 per cent in the main workers and 10.27 per cent in the marginal workers. The National Sample Survey Organisation (1983) estimated it at 17.36 millions. The Operational Research Group, Baroda puts the figure as 44 millions. Due to mechanisation of agriculture, depletion of cottage industries and lack of productive assets in the hands of poor families a large number of farm hands are being squeezed out of this sector and forced to migrate either in small towns or in urban centres.

In 1975, following the National Policy Resolution for Children 1974, a National Children's Board was constituted with the Prime Minister of India as its President. The main

objective of creating this Board was to bring about greater awareness and promote the welfare of children and to plan, review and coordinate programmes and services directed at children - including working children. To review the implementation of existing legislation and to suggest further legislation, the government established a Special Central Advisory Board on Child Labour in 1981.

Article 24 of Indian Constitution provides that "no" child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any hazardous employment. Similarly, Article 39(e) and (f) of the Directive Principles of State Policy requires the state to direct its policy towards securing that the health and strength of workers, men, women and the tender age of children are not abused and the "children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy climate and are protected against exploitation. In India the universalisation of primary education and the eradication of child labour are the two issues that have received serious attention from the Government since the adoption of our Constitution.

At the global level there have been several efforts to tackle the child labour problem and the eradication of child labour. The Twenty-third Session of the International Labour Conference 1973, had adopted a convention in which a special article for India was inserted, fixing the minimum age at which children be employed or may work in certain

occupations. The United Nations General Assembly adopted on the 21st December 1976, the Resolution 31/169 proclaiming the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child. The objective behind this Resolution was to create world-wide consciousness towards promoting the well-being of children, draw an attention to their special needs and encouraging national action on behalf of children, particularly, for the least privileged and those who were at work. The decision of United Nations to observed 1979 as the International year of the child has once again focussed world attention on the problem of child labour. The ILO study points out that the world's army of working children under 15 years of age has reached the size of about the entire population of France or Great Britain.

Though various regulations and legislations were passed on behalf of government to protect children from their exploitation by way of employing them in the hazardous industries; yet child labour remains prevalent in many sectors of Indian economy. It seems that the magnitude of child labour is increasing day by day. The following are the main enactments dealing with employment of children:

1. The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933
2. The Employment of Children Act, 1938
3. The Minimum Wage Act, 1948
4. The Factories Act, 1948
5. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951

6. The Merchant Shipping Act, 1958
7. The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961
8. The Apprentices Act, 1961
9. The Atomic Energy Act, 1962
10. The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Condition & Employment) Act, 1966
11. The Shops and Establishment Act in Various States
12. Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986.

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In 1986, the Child Labour Act (Prohibition and Regulation) Act was passed, which is the result of government's serious concern on the problem of child labour. The provisions of the Act make the employment of children prohibitory in certain specified hazardous occupations below the 14 years of age. These occupations include among others, rail and road transport, bidi (cigarette) making, the manufacturing of shellac matches, cement, soap, explosive and fire-works, mica cutting and splitting, building and construction works, factories plantations and merchant shipping, which are considered hazardous for health and development of children. The Act also contains provisions to regulate the working conditions in occupations permitted by it to employ children, and the role of health and safety measures are mentioned.

The recent re-assessment of Government policy on child labour aims at identifying the most effective way of dealing with the problem under the given conditions. The main conditions under this policy include:

- A. identification of factors, economic, cultural and other responsible for high incidence of child labour;
- B. examining the conditions where children work alone rather than those work in their own family;
- C. identification of occupations where it is difficult to prohibit the employment of children and provide better working conditions;
- D. to rehabilitate those children removed from prohibited occupations; and
- E. making efforts to strengthen income and employment generating programmes and education, health, nutritional and vocational training schemes in areas with high concentration of child labour.

With these considerations, the Social Welfare and Nutrition Division of Planning Commission, Government of India, envisaged to undertake a study in various states of the country to identify the region-specific factors for high incidence of child labour in different districts, both rural and urban based.

I.4 Child Labour in Carpet Industry

The area and scope of the present study is confined to the child labour working in the hand-made carpet industry of Mirzapur. This industry is not only known for the manufacturing of hand-made carpets of a high artistic design but also the involvement and concentration of child labour in the weaving process of carpet production.

In this industry, four kinds of carpets are manufactured such as durrie, cotton carpet, woollen carpet and silken

carpet. But among them, the manufacturing of woollen carpet is the most notable from the point of production and employment. The carpets are manufactured at the household level but under the control of merchant's capital and the weavers or artisans, who really produce carpets, are paid wages either on fixed rate or on piece-meal basis.

As mentioned in the third chapter, as per the 1981 Census, about 72 thousand persons are employed in this industry. It is also estimated or guessed that over one lakh weavers are engaged in this industry of Mirzapur. This industry is also characterised by the concentration of child labour employment. It is very difficult to quote an exact number of children (below 14 years) having engaged in this industry. But it is stated that not less than 60 thousand child workers are engaged in the weaving processes of this industry in Mirzapur which are carried out at the household, having scattered over in remote villages and the urban sub-borns of the Mirzapur district.

According to the 1981 Census, the total child population constitutes about 43 per cent of the total population of Mirzapur district. The proportion of the total workers (inclusive of main and marginal) belonging to the age group of 0-14 years is about 17 per cent of the total district child population. Having total 869034 child population in the district, the total number of child workers is 136432. Then assuming 60 thousands as child workers employed in the carpet industry. The proportion of the total 136432 child

workers engaged in the carpet industry would be about 44 per cent. This means that of 100 child workers, about 44 children are employed only in the carpet industry belonging to Mirzapur district. This magnitude of child labour shows the concentration of child labour in the carpet industry.

The carpet manufacturing process has three major operations : weaving, finishing and washing. In fact, the children are involved in all these operations in some form or other. But they are, by and large, involved in the first two operations. For instance, they do work right from tying warp to knotting of the fringes.

The concentration of child labour in the industry and performing different kinds of operation (that leads to a number of health hazards) present an alarming situation from the point of humanity and civil liberty which calls for proper investigation into the problem of child labour in the carpet industry.

I.5 The Objectives of the Study

In view of the high incidence of child labour in hand made carpet industry at Mirzapur, it becomes imperative to examine the factors responsible for the high incidence of child workers employed in the carpet industry. Therefore, the main objectives of the present study are the following :

- (a) to identify those households which supply their child labour;
- (b) to investigate the question of why the households supply their child labour for wages in the carpet industry at Mirzapur;
- (c) how and why the child labour is used in the industry;
- (d) to understand the perception and attitude of the working children about their work and use;
- (e) to analyse the implications of child labour use or abuse on their physical development and health; and
- (f) to study the extent to which the child labour is legally protected with social and welfare measures adopted by the Government as per the Indian Constitution, and different labour laws.

In view of the above objectives in the present study, the following are examined :

- (1) the socio-economic profile of the project area;
- (2) the socio-economic background of the households that supply child labour;
- (3) the socio-economic conditions of working children and their labour use;
- (4) physical development and health of the working children, and social infrastructures and utilisation;
- (5) legal status of the working children and difficulties in their protection.

I.6 Sample Design and Methodology

In order to examine the above objectives of the study, 492 households that supply child labour were selected on a random basis. In fact, 492 working children belong to these households. These children were selected because of two reasons. Firstly, they work at the household; and secondly,

it was difficult to conduct survey of the children in different so-called manufacturing units because they do not have plants for workshops or sheds. Moreover, all of them denied that they used child labour. All these households and working children were surveyed on the basis of structured questionnaire schedules. Moreover, 20 carpet manufacturers were selected on the random basis and structured questionnaire schedules were canvassed to collect desired and relevant informations from them. An interview method was also used to collect relevant informations regarding child labour from the concerned government officials and other functionaries like voluntary organisations and trade unions, if existed any there. However, the participant observation method was also applied to collect relevant observations from the employers, Government officials and other relevant functionaries.

Some relevant data from the secondary published and unpublished sources were also collected for the study purpose.

I.7 Chapter Plan

The present study contains the following chapters :-

- I Introduction which deals with the question of child labour at different angles; and the area, scope, objectives and sample design and methodology of the study.

- II A socio-economic profile of the project area where the study was conducted.
- III The nature and form of production in the carpet industry and its working conditions.
- IV The socio-economic background of the households which supply labour.
- V The socio-economic conditions in which the children work and the perception and attitude of working children concerning their work.
- VI Physical development of the working children, the health hazards they face, the availability of social infrastructures and awareness among them to derive benefits.
- VII Legal status of the working children and their protection.
- VIII Conclusions and suggestions.

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CHAPTER II

A Socio-Economic Profile of Mirzapur

Mirzapur is one of the most backward districts in Uttar Pradesh. It is a part of the Varanasi Division belonging to the eastern region of the state. It lies between the parallels of $23^{\circ} 52'$ and $25^{\circ} 32'$ North Latitude and $82^{\circ} 70'$ and $83^{\circ} 33'$ East Longitude. On the north and north-east, it bounded by Varanasi district; on the south by Sarguja of M.P.; on the east by the districts of Rohtas and Palamau of Bihar; on the south-west by Rewa of M.P.; and on the north-west by Allahabad.

The district has an area of 4952.5 sq. kms. having three major characteristics : Alluvial plain, Table Land and Sonpura. The alluvial plain lies within the basin of the Ganga being divided into two unequal parts. North of the stream lies a fertile and populous tract which is about 64 kms. in length from the east to the west and 32 kms. from the north to the south. The table land includes central Vindhyan Plateau that is the whole tract lying between the Vindhyan escarpment and Kaimur range. This is about 112 kms. from the east to the west and varies from 30 to 40 kms. in width from the north to the south, containing an area of 1600 sq. kms. The third one lies in the south of the Son river which consists of the most part of numerous parallel lines of rocky hills, of not great height, but rugged and clothed with jungles usually.

The climate is quite hot during summer but becomes cold during the winter season from November to the end of February. The district has rainfall an annual average of 1130 mms but with its uneven distribution.

II.4 Population and Occupation

The Mirzapur district had total population of 20.39 lakhs in 1981 which increased at the rate of 29.07 per cent during 1971-81. This rate of population growth was higher than the rate of 25.49 per cent at which the population of the state as a whole experienced during the same period. About 87 per cent of the total district population lives in the rural areas, having urban population a little more than 13 per cent of the total population. A majority of the urban population lives in 12 towns like Mirzapur, Renukot, Obra, Chunar and Dudhi, etc. The district has 4 tehsils and 20 blocks.

Table 2.1 : Population Size-wise Distribution of Villages in Mirzapur

Classification of Villages with Population Size	No. of Villages
Less than 200	425
200 to 499	510
500 to 999	443
1000 to 1999	237
2000 to 4999	80
5000 and above	3
All	1698

The rural people reside in 1698 villages of the district. The population size-wise distribution of the villages (Table 2.1) shows that more than 80 per cent of the rural population lives in the villages with a population size of upto 1000. In other words, a majority of the people, by and large, live in small villages.

The district is less densely populated than many of the districts in the state. The density of the population was only 180 per sq. km. in 1981 as compared to 377 in the state as a whole. The sex ratio i.e. females per thousand of males, was 888 in 1981 but that in the state was 858 in the same year. The scheduled castes and tribes constituted 32.60 per cent of the total district population but in the state, the proportion was 21.42 per cent. A little more than 23 per cent of the population was literate in the district. But the proportion of literates to the total population was 27.20 per cent in the state, showing higher literacy rate than that of the district. The literacy among the male and female population of the district were 35.10 per cent and 10.62 per cent respectively as compared to 38.76 per cent and 14.04 per cent respectively at the state level (Table 2.2).

The occupation-wise distribution of work force shows that the workers constitute 33.34 per cent of the total population of Mirzapur district, while 30.72 per cent of the total population of the state are the total workers.

Table 2.2 : Some Basic Demographic Characteristics*

	Mirzapur	U. P.
1. Population size (in lakhs)	20.39	1108.62
2. Population Growth (in %) (1971-81)	29.07	25.49
3. % of Total Population : a) Rural b) Urban	86.87 13.13	82.05 17.95
4. SC & ST as % of Population	32.60	21.42
5. Density of Population	180	377
6. Sex-Ratio	888	858
7. Literates as % of Total Population	23.58	27.16
a) Male b) Female	35.10 10.62	38.76 14.04
8. Workers as % of Total Population	33.34	30.72
a) Main b) Marginal	32.61 0.73	29.23 1.49
9. % of Main Workers as :		
a) Cultivators b) Agricultural Labourers c) Household Industry, Manufacturing d) Other workers	38.35 27.99 11.32 22.34	58.52 15.98 3.70 21.80

* Based on 1981 Census.

Majority of the workers are the main workers in the district as well as in the state. A little more than 38 per cent. of the main workers are cultivators in the district but the cultivators' constitute about 59 per cent. of the total workers in U.P. as a whole. About 28 per cent of the main workers are agricultural labourers in the district which is much higher than what is found in the state (16 per cent).

In this way, agriculture provides employment for a little more than 66 per cent of the main workers in the district. The other workers constitute 22.34 per cent of the district total main workers which is slightly more than that of the state. A little more than 11 per cent of the main workers are engaged in the household industry of the district but in the state, it is only about 4 per cent. All these occupational characteristics of the population show that the unorganised sector like agricultural and household industry is the major source of employment in the district.

III.2 Land Use and Agriculture

The district has a total area of 4.50 lakh hectares of which 2.44 lakh hectares is the cultivable area. The net area under cultivation is 2.08 lakh hectares which constitutes 46.22 per cent of the total reporting area and 85.24 per cent of the total cultivable area. This means that more than half of the district total area is not cultivable due to having hilly tracts and forests. In fact, the area under forests is 25 per cent of the total area and about 9 per cent of that area is used other than agriculture, the rest being usar and non-culturable. The land which the people hold and operate in the district is mostly small in size, having unequal pattern of its distribution.

According to 1985-86 Agricultural Census, the marginal and small holdings constitute 82 per cent of the total

Table 2.3 : Basic Characteristics of Land Use and Operational Holdings and Area

	Mirzapur	U. P. (*'000 ha.)
1. Total reporting area (in ha.)	450136	29768
2. Total cultivable area (in ha.)	244258	20101
3. Net sown area (in ha.)	208517	17232
4. Area sown more than once (in ha.)	67793	8114
5. Gross cropped area (in ha.)	276310	25346
6. Net irrigated area (in ha.)	40688	10332
7. Gross irrigated area (in ha.)	140821	14375
8. Average size of holding (in ha.)	1.45	0.93
9. % of total number holdings		
a) Marginal	64.00	72.60
b) Small	18.60	15.60
10. % of total operated area under marginal and small holdings	31.61	51.60
11. Average size of marginal holdings (in ha.)	0.35	0.36

Sources :

- a) Statistical Diary 1990, Office of the Economics and Statistical Officer, Mirzapur, State Planning Institute, Government of U.P.
- b) Statistical Diary, 1991, State Planning Institute, Government of U.P.
- c) Agricultural Census of Land Holdings, 1985-86, Board of Revenue, Government of U.P.

Notes : Figures from 1 to 7 under Mirzapur refer to 1980-81 and based on sources (a) and (b); and figures from 8 to the last refer to 1985-86 based on the source (c).

number of operational holdings in the district, 64 per cent of which are the marginal holdings alone. But the total area under marginal and small holdings constitute only about one-third of the total operated area of the district. The average size of marginal holding is 0.35 hectare but the average size of all holdings taken together is 1.45 hectare in the district. If all this compared with the state, the proportion of marginal and small holdings to the total number of holdings, being 88 per cent, and that of the area under these holdings to the total operated area, being about 52 per cent, are higher than those found in the district. However, the average size of holding is 0.93 hectare in the state which is smaller than in the district, except the case of marginal size which is, more or less, the same.

Table 2.3 shows that the total cropped area is 2.76 lakh hectares, 0.67 lakh hectares of which is the area sown more than once. This means that 24.27 per cent of the cropped area or 32.21 per cent of the net sown area is sown more than once. Most of the area under cultivation is used for subsistence crop production. The extent of irrigation indicates that about 53 per cent of net area sown is irrigated in the district whereas the same proportion is 57 per cent in the state. The extent of gross irrigated area is about 51 per cent of the gross cropped area. The main sources of irrigation in the district are canal (78.20 per cent) followed by tubewell (14.90 per cent), well (4.20 per cent), pond/lake (0.50 per cent) and other sources (2.20 per

cent). Despite all this, the intensity of cropping is 131 in the district, while it is 142 in the state.

Wheat and paddy are the principal crops of the district as only these two crops covered 30.00 per cent and 31.36 per cent of the gross cropped area respectively. Jowar and Bajra are also important crops which are grown in 4.66 per cent and 3.36 per cent of the gross cropped area of the district. In this way, food crops covered more than 90 per cent of the gross cropped area of the district. The cultivation of the commercial crops was not significant in the district as the area of commercial crops is only about 7 per cent in the district as against about 13 per cent in the state. Thus, the subsistence crops are mainly grown in the district and the 'cropping' pattern is not diversified. Moreover, the productivity of all the major crops grown is found to be quite low in the district in comparison with the state average. The yield levels of paddy and wheat which are cultivated in more than 60 per cent of the gross cropped area are 9.69 and 12.79 quintals per ha. in the district as against 13.54 and 19.79 quintals per ha. in the state. The productivity of only three crops namely Bajra, Jowar and Sugarcane is found to be marginally higher in the district than what is observed in the state.

The characteristics of agricultural development presented in Table 2.4 show the use of modern inputs in agriculture and the level of agricultural development in Mirzapur and in the state as a whole.

Table 2.4 : Characteristics of Agricultural Development

	Mirzapur	U. P.
1. % of total area under commercial crops (1982-83)	6.90	12.80
2. Intensity of cropping (1982-83)	134.45	145.16
3. Per ha. consumption of fertilizers (in kg.) (1983-84)	35.50	65.59
4. Per tractor gross cropped area (in ha.) (1982-83)	381.47	329.96
5. % of total consumption of electricity in agriculture (1981-82)	2.99	29.68
6. Consumption of electricity per hectare of net sown area (KWH) (1981-82)	140.16	176.52
7. No. of energised private pumpsets/tubewells (1985)	3368	484509
8. Average yield of foodgrains per hectare (in kg.) (1982-83)	9.23	13.23
9. Gross value of agricultural produce (at current prices) in Rs. (1981-82)		
a) Per hectare of net sown area	3063	4473
b) Per capita (rural)	664	850

Source : District-wise Indicators of Development, Area Planning Division, State Planning Institute, Government of U.P., 1985

The use of modern inputs in agriculture appears to be low in the district. The available data suggests the per tractor gross cropped area was only 381.47 ha. and per hectare consumption of fertilizers was 35.50 kg. in the district during 1983-84 in comparison with 329.59 hectares

and 65.59 kg. respectively in the state during the same year. The electricity consumed in agriculture was only 2.99 per cent of the total electricity consumed in the district during 1983-84 while the same was as high as 29.69 per cent at the state level. The consumption of electricity per ha. of net sown area (in KWH) was 140.16 in the district, while it was 176.52 in the state.

Thus, agriculture, the mainstay of the population in the district, is in the subsistence and underdeveloped stage. As a result, the gross value of agricultural produce per hectare of net area sown and rural per capita at current prices during 1983-84 were only Rs.3063 and Rs.664 respectively in the district as against Rs.4473 and Rs.850 respectively in the state.

II.3 Animal Husbandry and Livestock

Animal husbandry is one of the important allied agricultural activities in rural areas which helps in supplementing the income of the rural people. Table 2.5 presents some of the basic characteristics of animal husbandry. The total livestock went up at the rate of about 17 per cent during 1978-82 in the district, while it was 8.39 per cent in the state during the same period. The density of livestock in terms of per 100 hectare of reporting area was 136 in the district but 205 in the state. The number of livestock per 1000 of population was also

Table 2.5 : Some Basic Characteristics of Livestock Population

Items	Mirzapur	U. P.
1. Growth rate of livestock population (in %)(1978-82)	16.55	8.39
2. No. of livestock per 100 ha. of reporting area (1983-84)	136	205
3. No. of milch cattle per 100 of population (1982)	17	13
4. No. of livestock per 1000 of population (1982)	802	543
5. No. of poultry per 1000 of population (1982)	159	62
6. No. of male cattle per 1000 of plough (1982)	2314	1425
7. Per veterinary hospital number of livestock in ("000)(1983-84)	61	45

Source : District-wise Indicators of Development, Area Division, State Planning Institute, Government of U.P., 1986

found to be more in the district than in the state. The rural people keep more milch cattle in the district than what is found in the state. The district does not have agriculture as mechanised as found in other parts of the state. As a result, the number of male cattle per 1000 of plough was 2314 in the district, while it was only 1425 in the state as a whole. The number of poultry per 1000 of population was found to be 159 as against only 62 in the state. In fact, the district has a very high proportion of SC & ST population and the rearing of chicken in particular

is a part of their life style. Hence the number is more than what is found in the state as a whole. Despite having a high density of livestock, the number of veterinary hospital is very much limited as so the number of livestock per veterinary hospital is more in the district than in the state as a whole.

All these characteristics indicate that in Mirzapur, with its quite backward agriculture, animal husbandry is an integral part of rural life style and the livestock occupies an important place in the district.

II.4 Industrial Enterprises and Development

There are 42 registered factories in the district in which 14933 workers are engaged. This constitutes 33.22 per cent of the total wage employment (i.e. 44946) and 13 per cent of the total workers employed in all the industrial enterprises of the district. It is already mentioned somewhere else that the proportion of the main workers engaged in the household-cum-other manufacturing industries is small there. All this shows that the organised sector is small in size in the district.

The share of manufacturing sector to the total net output of the district is about 38 per cent which appears to be significant. But it should be noted that the share of the organised industrial sector to this output is quite

meagre. The number of workers per enterprise is 2.32 and the number of hired workers per establishment is 4.06. But the workers in registered factories per one lakh of population is 553.07 and the hired workers in establishments per one lakh of population are 7664.66 in the district. All this shows that (a) the size of organised sector is small and (b) a majority of the workers are engaged in self-employed enterprises belonging to the unorganised sector of the district.

The Statistical Diary of Mirzapur, 1990 indicates that there are 1406 units working in different rural and small scale industries of the district, having 7034 workers engaged in them. The organisational structure of these units shows that 821 and 21 units related to Khadi and Village Industries are controlled and managed by the individual entrepreneurs/industrialists and industrial cooperative societies respectively; 429 units of small scale industries are controlled and managed by the individual industrialists; and they also control and manage 31 handloom units. The industrial cooperative societies control and manage 91 of handicraft units in the district. There are 12 miscellaneous units which are under the control and management of the different Gram Panchayats. In fact, most of these industrial units are under the private control and management because of the limited interests of the industrialists.

Table 2.5 : Industrial Enterprises and Development
in Mirzapur

1. No. of Industrial Enterprises	49715
a) Agricultural	3434
	(6.91)
b) Non-agricultural	46281
	(93.09)
2. No. of establishments employing	
a) one or more than one hired workers	11067
	(22.26)
b) with self-employed or unpaid workers	38648
	(77.72)
3. No. of workers	
a) hired workers	115545
	44946
	(38.90)
b) self-employed	70599
	(61.10)
4. No. of registered factories	42
5. No. of workers in registered factories	14933
6. As % of 3 (a)	(32.22)
7. Total output of registered factories (in Rs.)	8437500
8. No. of worker per enterprise	2.32
9. No. of worker per enterprise that employs hired workers	4.06
10. Share of manufacturing sector to total net output (in %)(1983-84)	37.80
11. No. of workers per registered factories	355.54
12. No. of workers in registered factories per lakh of population	553.07
13. No. of hired workers per one lakh of population	1664.66

Figures in brackets refer to percentages

- Source : 1. 1990 Economic Census of U.P., Govt. of U.P.
 2. Statistical Diary, Mirzapur, 1990, District
 Economic and Statistical Office, Mirzapur,
 1990, Government of U.P.
 3. District-wise Indicators of Development, Area
 Planning Division, State Planning Institute,
 Government of U.P., 1986

In order to promote private investment and entrepreneurship, the district has also constructed and developed two Industrial Estates in which only 179 persons are employed and the total output worth of Rs.99 lakhs is produced. This appears to be a quite inflated figure, if the size of employment is taken into consideration.

Mirzapur is endowed with natural resources for industrial development and with skilled manpower for the development of village and cottage industries. But considering the existence of such potentials, Mirzapur is industrially still underdeveloped.

II.5 Infrastructure

The existence of sufficient infrastructural facilities is a prerequisite for the development of any area. The road, railways, postal services, education, medical and marketing are the basic infrastructural facilities which are required to promote the process of economic development. When we view the availability and network of these facilities in Mirzapur district, it is evident that extensive efforts are still needed to develop major infrastructures in the district. The length of pucca road per hundred sq. km. of area and per lakh of population were 15.61 kms. and 86.56 kms. respectively in the Mirzapur district upto 1985 as compared to 27.56 kms. and 73.19 kms. respectively at the state level. The length of railway

lines per thousand sq. km. was 25.02 kms. in the district upto 1985 in comparison with 29.36 kms. at the state level. The number of post offices and telegraph offices per lakh of population were 15 and 1.28 in the district upto 1985 as against 16 and 2.05 in the state. The number of telephones per lakh of population were 103 in the district while the same were 172 in the state. As far the educational institutions are concerned, the number of junior basic schools per lakh of population were higher in the district (78.22) than the state (66.24) in 1985. However, the number of senior basic schools, higher secondary schools and degree colleges per lakh of population were 11.57, 3.87 and 0.25 respectively in the district upto 1985 while the same were 13.28, 5.15 and 0.36 respectively in the state. The number of allopathic hospitals/dispensaries per lakh of population were found to be higher in the district (3.25) than the state (2.91) in the year 1984. However, the number of beds per lakh of population in these hospitals were lower in the district (42.17) as compared to state (49.59) during the same period. The number of cold storages per thousand sq. kms. of area and the number of registered marketing centres per lakh of net area sown were also found to be quite lower in the district than that of the state average upto 1985. The distribution of villages according to the distance-wise accessibility of social infrastructures in the district shows that there are only 10 villages where in such infrastructural facilities are situated. Most of the villages (i.e. 1462 out of 1698) are more than 5 kms away

from the places where these facilities are available. This way that most of the villages do not have easy physical access to the social infrastructural facilities. Thus, the major infrastructural facilities in the Mirzapur district are only underdeveloped and far below the level already existed in the state, and also inaccessible to the people in the rural areas of the state.

II.6 District Plan for Mirzapur (1992-93)

Under the process of decentralisation of planning the state plan has been divided into state sector and district sector. The schemes whose benefit is not limited to one particular district are included under the state sector. On the other hand, the rest of the schemes whose benefit is limited to a particular district are kept under the district sector. 70 per cent of the total plan outlay has been distributed for the state sector schemes and the rest 30 per cent for district sector schemes.

Under the annual plan outlay for 1992-93 for district Mirzapur the administration has decided an outlay of Rupees 123429 thousand for different schemes/programmes. These programmes are being conducted by various development departments to obtain the objectives of creating more productive employment opportunities, emphasising rural development programmes, increase in growth rate, increase in production, self-sufficiency and equality. To complete the

unfinished task of the Seventh Five Year Plan the government has made sufficient monetary arrangements for completing the same for 1991-92. The basic objectives of the Eighth Five Year Plan are to remove social inequality, to give housing facilities to weaker sections in rural areas, for the integrated development of weaker sections of society, to provide sufficient number of handpumps to solve the drinking water problem, along with rural sanitation and rural employment programme.

Since 1982-83, U.P. has adopted decentralised planning one of its main objectives is to remove the existing disparities between various blocks of the (63) districts of U.P. With this objective in view extra amount is made available for backward district development based on their population size and certain indicators of development. Besides, on the national level aspirations of the masses and their cooperation and participation are other objectives being given priority while decentralising the system.

The main objectives of the 1992-93 district plan for Mirzapur are as follows :

II.6.1 Employment : For 1992-93 Rs.18985 thousand have been sanctioned. The district rural development authority have implemented TRYSEM. Besides landless and SC and ST's are being provided job opportunities. New industrial units are being set up to provide employment.

II.6.2 Rural Development : For drinking water in rural areas, a sum of Rs.10500 thousand have been allotted, out of which housing receives Rs.1100 thousand, Rs.4380 thousand for village lavatories and Rs.4593 thousand for roads an amount of Rs.3500 have been made available for expansion of dairying.

II.6.3 Agriculture : Major objectives of agricultural development are : (a) priority to be given for the development of irrigated and dry land farmings; (b) Rs.7600 thousand will be spent on expansion and improvement in irrigation to increase agricultural yield. To revive small irrigation schemes for which Rs.800 thousand have been sanctioned; and (c) regions with high concentration of harijan population have been sanctioned Rs.90 thousand for generating income through the process of industrialisation. Dairying is allotted Rs.3500 thousand for the year 1992-93.

II.6.4 Social Development : Rs.2933 thousand have been set aside for the development of weaker sections of society i.e. ST/SCs, handicapped and women. Rs.8400 are sanctioned for old age pension and welfare of the aged.

II.6.5 Education : For 1992-93, Rs.11891 thousand have been sanctioned for education. For adult education programme Rs.500 thousand have been set aside.

II.6.6 Health : Rs.8265 thousand have been allotted for the health programme in 1992-93.

In a brief, what all the above shows is the backwardness and underdevelopment of the district, having agriculture as the main source of subsistence and livelihood. One of the most striking features of its agriculture is the existence of a very high proportion of agricultural labourers who primarily depend on agricultural wages but in the condition of agricultural backwardness and industrial underdevelopment.

The district plan of Mirzapur has laid emphasis on the development of its rural sector in order to develop agriculture and to create productive employment. The case of social development inclusive of health is also taken into consideration. But the question of development of technoeconomic structures and of the village and cottage industries is not taken into account. Some serious and consistent planned efforts are required for the development of the district economy of Mirzapur.

CHAPTER III

Carpet Industry in Mirzapur

Mirzapur district is well known for the manufacture of hand-made carpets in the world. The manufacturing work of hand-made carpets enfold traditional durrie weaving craftsmanship of a high artistic order.

It is known when carpet manufacturing was started in Mirzapur. The District Gazetteer of Mirzapur (1959, p.120) states the following :

"In the days of Akbar carpets were made at Jaunpur and Allahabad, so it is possible that weavers might have migrated from there places to the district. Manufacture of carpets first started in the village of Ghosia and then spread to the adjacent village of Madho Singh. These places are even today the chief centres of this industry in the rural tracts."

There is no doubt that this industry was in existence during the Mughal period, specially at the time of Akbar who invited some Persian weavers to set up royal workshop in his palace. The Aine-Akbari of Abdul-Fazal also corroborates this fact that carpets were manufactured during Akbar's days in particular. In his Indian Crafts, D.N. Saraf has also

mentioned this fact. Hence it may be a historical reality about the spread of carpet manufacturing work in Mirzapur via Jaunpur and Allahabad. There is no doubt, however, that the industry has been in existence for more than three hundred years.

"Mirzapur carpets gained international distinction also in the colonial era, since after the Great London Exhibition of 1851, some British mercantile interests also grabbed as sizeable portion of the trade in it. The British aristocracy emerged as the new patrons of the industry. Some British owned companies like H. Talle & Sons, E. Hell & Co. and Obettee (Pvt.) Ltd. continued to dominate it almost until the 1950's".¹

During the Second World War, the industry became crisis-laden owing to the shortage of raw materials and trade movement facilities. Priority to the production of blankets for the army was another cause for the crisis from which the industry suffered during that period. Moreover, the "de-industrialisation" policy of the colonial rule, as Bagchi² mentioned, was the basic cause for the erosion and underdevelopment of the domestic industry in British India. But it is a fact that the combination of merchant capital with industrial capital in British which persists even in today's India, was responsible for both, disintegration and retention of the industry.

III.2 Nature and Form of Production

The carpet industry in the Mirzapur-Bhadohi belt of U.P. is purely cottage based and export-oriented. The total value of carpets manufactured in this belt constitutes 80 per cent of India's total carpet output and more than three-fourth of total carpets' export in the country is also from this belt.

The cottage-based and commercial characteristics of the carpet industry indicate that the carpets are manufactured by the weavers with looms at the household level in remote villages and in the urban suburbs, and the merchants have control over the supply of carpets for sale in the market. In other words, the physical labour power of the weavers is incorporated into tangible production, and the surplus of which is realised as an exchange value in the market by the merchants who are also called as the manufacturers. This manufacturing system in the industry shows that form of production in which the merchants-cum-manufacturers have captured the production of hand-made carpets manufactured by the weavers at the household level in the rural and semi-urban areas. These two characteristics of the carpet industry, thus, broadly present a case of the manufacturing form of production in Mirzapur. This form of production could be understood better, if the organisational structure of the industry is taken into consideration.

The industry has three-tier organisational structures³ :-
 (a) at the top are the merchants-cum-manufacturers; (b) at

the bottom of the ladder are the weavers who perform the manufacturing work; and (c) in the middle are the intermediaries through which most of the production in the industry is carried out on a contract basis.

The merchants-cum-manufacturers do not produce carpets but control their supply for sale at the home market and in the foreign market. Hence they are also exporters. There are some merchants/manufacturers who have their own sheds for clearing, washing and brushing the carpets manufactured by the weavers for sale in the market.

It is the weavers who are the real producers in Mirzapur. Among them, there are certain master weavers who do supervisory work and train others for weaving. There are certain master weavers who have their own looms; and there are also some master weavers who do not own looms. Those who own looms, are tied to specific merchants-cum-manufacturers and they manufacture carpets with the help of family labour or hired weavers or both combined. The master weavers not owning looms work for those who own looms. In all such cases, payments are made in the form of either commissions or piece wages, depending upon the categories of the master weavers with looms, without looms, and hired weavers who work with the master weavers. In this way, the weavers work collectively and their collective labour power is incorporated into tangible production. In the middle are the intermediaries that exist and operate in different forms and orders. The middle ladder of the organisation is very

complex because many of the master weavers - whether they own looms or not - also work as a link between the merchants-cum-manufacturers and the weavers in terms of procuring raw materials for the weavers from the former, supervising the quality and time schedule of production and delivering the carpets to the manufacturers from the weavers.

There are also commission agents who may be small manufacturers or contractors, operating between the manufacturers in Mirzapur and loom owners scattered in far off villages in the district. These agents get commission from the manufacturers and at the same time, they also take out a part of the wages paid to the loom owners and weavers.

Thus the middle ladder of the organisation, as the above shows, has also broadly three layers : (a) the loom owners-cum-master weavers who act as a link between the master workers (with no looms)/weavers and the merchants-cum-manufacturers; (b) commission agents between loom owners in remote rural areas of the district and the merchants-cum-manufacturers; and (c) contractors who may be small manufacturers make contract with the merchants-cum-manufacturers in Mirzapur for the supply of carpets to them from the master weavers or loom owners belonging to the villages and semi-urban areas. All this shows that the process of intermediation between the merchants-cum-manufacturers and the weavers is multi-faced and multi-pronged.

The three-tier organisational characteristics of the industry, in fact, present that manufacturing form of production in which merchant capital dominates the manufacturing process of production in the industry and the weavers sell their labour power but do not share the fruits of their labour. Lenin explained the character of such manufacturing form of production as follows : "under manufacture, merchant's capital was combined with industrial capital. It was interwoven with it in the most diverse ways and the dependence of operatives on the capitalist assumed a host of forms and shades, ranging from work for hire in another person's workshop to work for a 'master' and, finally, to dependence in the purchase of raw materials or in the sale of product. At the sametime, there always remained a large number of quasi-independent producers under manufacture."⁴ The basic character of the merchant capital-dominated manufacturing form of production in industries like hand-made carpets lies in the artisan-based process of production at looms by distributing work to artisan households.

III.3 Enterprises, Manufacturers and Employment

In Mirzapur, there are 12786 enterprises involved in the carpet industry, and the total number of persons employed in all these enterprises is 71774. Most of the enterprises manufacture woollen carpets and 118 of the total enterprises manufacture durrie and the rest cotton and silken carpets.

Table 3.1 shows that the woollen carpets enterprises, being major part of the industry, employ about 98 per cent of the total employment belonging to all enterprises in the district. The total number of enterprises being 12786 indicates that there may be looms not less than this total number in Mirzapur district. It is estimated that "there may be 70,000 looms and over 2 lakh weavers and artisans and other workers in allied processes in this carpet industry in the Mirzapur Bhadohi belt".⁵ In Mirzapur district alone, it is guessed that there may be over 20,000 looms and not less than 1.5 lakh weavers, and other artisans and workers employed in allied processes in the carpet industry. A sizeable portion of the work force engaged in this industry is said to be

Table 3.1 : Enterprises and Employment in Carpet Industry : Mirzapur

Manufacturing Items	Number	Employment
1. Durrie	118 (0.92)	1037 (1.45)
2. Cotton Carpet	71 (0.55)	440 (0.61)
3. Woollen Carpet	12594 (98.50)	70290 (97.93)
4. Silken Carpet	3 (0.03)	7 (0.01)
All	12786 (100.0)	71774 (100.0)

Source : Census of India, Part -XD, Series 22 : Handicrafts Survey Report : Durrie Industry in Fatehpur Sikri (Table 1.1) : District-wise Enterprises and Employment; pp.3-4).

child labour.⁶ A rough estimate made in this connection is suggested to be about sixty thousands of child workers in the carpet industry of Mirzapur. The children below 14 years also come from Palamau to work in this industry. The silver jubilee special of All India Manufacturer's Association, 1984 shows that there are 25 exporters-cum-manufacturers in Mirzapur town and 125 in Banaras-Bhadohi town areas. Many of the manufacturers located in Banaras and Bhadohi also operate in the carpet industry of Mirzapur district. There are basically merchants who deal with export-import business regarding the sale of manufactured carpets in the Mirzapur-Bhadohi belt.

All this shows that carpet industry is quite significant in the district, having a sizeable number of enterprises and persons employed therein. The woollen carpets manufacturing enterprises, by and large, dominate numerically in the district. But they are under the control of merchants and their merchant capital. The industry has such an organisational structure wherein the enterprise's and the system of production operate and function in order to extract the surplus produce of carpets for realising as an exchange value by the merchants in the market. Hence they are neither the units of the household form of production in actual sense of the term nor those of capitalist form of production. However, the manufacturing form of production operating within the fold of merchant capital remains under the cover

of cottage based industry for exploiting the weavers in favour of the merchants' interests.

III.4 Working Condition in Hand-Made Carpet Industry

The hand-made carpet industry in India is an essentially labour intensive, rural based and export oriented cottage industry. Most of the manufacturers - exporters of handmade carpet in Bhadohi-Mirzapur belt do not have factory for weaving nor do they employ weavers. By and large, weaving is done by the weavers who work on the looms installed in their premises or installed by other persons in the villages scattered over this large belt and few number of manufactures have sheds under which beating, cleaning and polishing are done by weavers and other workers.

To understand the hand-made carpet industry in terms of working pattern, work process, employment structure, extent of child employment, working hours, wage levels, payment of wages, record keeping, facilities provided by employers for skill development, working conditions and environment, common occupational hazards, safety measures taken by the employers, accidents and provision of compensation thereon, and other matters related to labour legislations, the informations were collected from the employers of selected hand-made carpet manufacturing units through observations, discussions and structured questionnaire. The survey work of carpet industries was carried out in only those establishments which are registered as manufacturers-cum-exporter.

An attempt is made here to present a brief analysis of data collected from the owners and managers of 20 hand-made carpet manufacturing units selected on a random basis in Mirzapur. The year of establishment of the surveyed units in the sample varied from 1932 to 1985 and on an average sample units are working for the last 16 years. The manufacturing units which are working for the last 11 to 15 years constituted 40 per cent of the total sample. About 25 per cent of them were established 16 to 20 years back. There are units which were established 21 to 50 years ago and they constitute 10 per cent. Both male and female workers are employed in the hand-made carpet manufacturing units. At initial stage when the units were established, per unit 186 workers including child workers were employed and now this figure is increased by more than 10 times. The share of child workers in total workforce engaged in these hand-made carpet units is accounted about 45 per cent. By and large, there has been no change in the proportion of child workers since initial stage of their establishment.

Per unit, the number of child workers was 37 in the starting year and now it has gone upto 875. The lowest age of working child in the sample industry is recorded 9 years in case of male and it is 11 years in case of female child. All the employers in the sample reported one working shift in their units. Children are employed in all the sample units except in one case. Generally, hours of work are reported eight hours for adult workers but for child workers a great

variation has been observed as far as duration of work is concerned.

The concept of overtime work is also associated with the carpet industry. The child workers do over time work as reported by employers. However, it is told that the child workers are not employed during night time.

Carpet weaving is a family tradition and child starts learning knotting from the early age and after few years of practice on the loom under the guidance of the family members becomes a skilled hand. The traditional system of weaving and engaging children in the weaving process has been continuing since decades in the handmade carpet manufacturing industry. Employment of children in the weaving process is not a new phenomenon in the district rather it has been a traditional one. This true fact is also reported by all the sample employers. Information gathered from the employers regarding the trend of child employment in the handmade carpet industry for the last 5 years indicate that the number of child workers is increasing year to year as reported by all the respondents. It is evidenced by the fact that the magnitude of child employment in the carpet industry is very high and the number is increasing day by day.

Some questions generally arise as to why the children are being employed in the carpet industry and why the parents allow their children to work? what are the factors responsible for high incidence of child workers in the carpet industry. The field survey revealed that poverty,

lack of economic and social security, large families, unemployment among adults, illiteracy and incomplete education, ignorance of parents are the main causes behind the phenomenon of child labour. A widespread poverty among the households in rural areas has been the foremost cause of child labour in the district. Due to poverty, the households are unable to give education to their children. As a result the parents are compelled to send their children to take up wage employment to the detriment of their health, education and general well-being. The parents do not underscore the future of their children due to illiteracy and ignorance. Illiteracy and low level of education are also equally responsible for the employment of children in the carpet industry.

The children of poor families offer their services at a lower wage rate and the employers find very cheap to employ child workers. This view is reported by almost all the respondents. Regarding other factors responsible for high incidence of child labour in handmade carpet industry, about 85 per cent of the respondents also pointed out that child workers are preferred to employment in carpet industry because they are comparatively more amenable to discipline than the adult workers. Similarly, the children do not have bargaining power and they do not protest against any exploitation. Furthermore, child workers are not organised on the lines of trade unions which can militantly fight for their cases.

Data collected from the employers regarding the wage levels of workers engaged in handmade carpet industry indicate that per day average wage of a male adult workers is Rs.27, having variation from Rs.25 to Rs.30. Similarly, average wage rate for male child workers is Rs.22 per day which is about 18 per cent lower than the wages of male adult workers.

Among the female workers, the wages for child and adult are found to be approximately equal. The wage rate of female workers is reported less than half of the wage rate given to the male workers. The wage discrimination against female workers highlights that the Equal Remuneration Act passed by Government is also violated in the carpet industry. The wages are given to workers in cash in all the cases and the child workers collect their wages by themselves.

During the discussion with employers of the sample enterprises, it is found that neither the registers are maintained nor the records related to child workers are kept by the employers. Due to lack of records and non-availability of informations about the employment of child labour, it becomes difficult for enforcement machinery to implement the Child Labour Act. This fact is also narrated by the officials of Labour Department.

Under the industrial laws, the employers are supposed to provide certain welfare measures and facilities such as, non-formal education, vocational training to their workers for

the development of their skill. But surprisingly, it is found that no employer has extended these facilities to their workers in the hand-made carpet industry. The management of industry has also not provided other welfare measures such as formal education and text books, free uniform, medical checkup, nutritional food, recreation, sanitation, canteen etc. for general development.

The physical working condition at the workplace in carpet units are found most inhygeinic. The problem of dust particles is associated almost with all the carpet manufacturing units. As a result, a significant proportion of workers engaged in handmade carpet industry are suffering from breathing problem. It was also observed that arrangements of light at the workplace are also not properly maintained in some of the enterprises. Problems related to eyes are also reported by some of the workers. About half of the sample enterprises also lack proper sanitation arrangements. The general working environment in terms of space, ventilation, cleanliness, lighting, sanitation etc. in workplace is observed not satisfactory in most of the hand-made carpet manufacturing units. In many cases, safe drinking water is not provided at the work place. Some common occupational hazards are associated with work in hand-made carpet manufacturing process. Problems like body pain, joints pain, breathing difficulty and primary complex of T.B. are the main occupational hazards from which the workers, particularly the child workers suffer. None of the carpet

manufacturers has provided safety measures at the work place to provide medical assistance against accidents and other complications related to weaving process. Compensation, in case of any accident, is also not paid by the employers to their workers. Similarly medical assistance is not extended to the workers.

The hand-made carpet industry is not covered under the Factory Act, being cottage-based in character. However, the the Minimum Wage Act, Shops and Commercial Establishment Act and Child Labour Act are applicable in the carpet industry. These Acts are supposed to be implemented for the welfare of workers through various departments of government and other implementing machineries. However, through discussion with employers and workers, it has been found that all these are generally being violated by the employers. Frequent visits are expected to be made by the concerned officials of enforcement department. Such visits of the enforcement officials could help in strengthening the process of implementation of the regulations and Acts to a great extent. In this context, informations are collected from the manufacturers/managers of the hand-made carpet manufacturing industries. The informations revealed that during the last five years the concerned officials of Labour Department made their visits every year as reported by all the employers in the sample. In some cases, it is told that the officials from District Industries Centres also visited their units. Income Tax Inspectors are also among the officials who also

made their visits. But an overall situation was such that all the relevant laws were violated by the manufacturers. In fact, these manufacturers are not covered under the Factories Act, because of the merchant dominated household form of production. All these manufacturers are the merchants who control the weaving process of carpet production carried out at the household level with the help of a multitude of middle men between them and the workers. That is why Lenin said that "the combination of merchant's capital with industrial capital makes the position of the direct producer considerably worse than that of the wage workers, lengthens his working days, reduces his earnings and retards economic and cultural development."⁷

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5. Prembhai, op.cit., p.2.
6. This is based on our observations that we after having interviews with different sections of the people in Mirzapur.
7. Lenin, op.cit., p.446.

CHAPTER IV

Socio-Economic Background of the Sample Households and the Supply of Child Labour

The main objective of this chapter is to comprehend the supply aspect of child labour at the household level. It is the households which supply their child labour for wage income in the labour market. In view of this, the socio-economic background of the sample households (inclusive of the educational status of the heads of the families) is presented here on the basis of relevant data collected from 492 households belonging to Mirzapur. The idea behind the presentation of their socio-economic background is to capture the question of why the child labour is supplied by them in the labour market. In addition to this, an attempt is also made to comprehend the reasons due to which the sample households supply their child labour for paid work in the labour market. In this way, an answer to the questions of who supplies child labour and why it is supplied is sought here.

IV.1 Demographic Features

In all, 492 households from which the children are working as child labour in hand-made carpet industry were selected for detailed investigation in Mirzapur.

Table 4.1 shows the family size and age-wise distribution of population in the 492 sample households of

Table 4.1 : Family Size and Age-wise Distribution of Population in the Sample Households

Age Group (Years)	Population		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
0 - 6	246	196	442	14.71
6 - 11	414	236	650	21.63
11 - 14	462	77	539	17.94
14 - 18	91	51	142	4.72
18 - 60	607	571	1178	39.20
60 +	34	20	54	1.80
Total Population	1854	1151	3005	100.00
Sex Ratio	—	621	—	—
Per Household Population	6.11	—	—	—

Mirzapur district. Under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986, "Child" means a person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age and "adolescent" means a person who has completed his fourteenth and has not completed his eighteenth year of age. According to this definition, children constitute nearly 55 per cent of the total sample whereas adolescents constitute only 4.72 per cent of the total sample population. The sex-ratio shows that there are

621 females per thousand males showing the dominance of male population in the sample. The population per household is 6.11 which shows total disregard for family planning.

Table 4.2 shows the educational level of our sample population. The table clearly shows that a majority of the population of our sample (i.e. 82 per cent) is illiterate.

Table 4.2 : Educational Level of Sample Population

Educational Level	Age Groups (Years)					
	3-18	18 & Above	Total	Per Household	Percentage Distribution of Population According to Education	
Male						
Illiterate	799	489	1288	2.62	73.09	
Primary	256	133	389	0.79	22.08	
Upto Secondary	53	20	73	0.15	4.15	
Beyond Secondary	4	8	12	0.02	0.68	
Total	1112	650	1762	3.58	100.00	
Female						
Illiterate	469	569	1038	2.11	95.84	
Primary	27	18	45	0.09	4.16	
Upto Secondary	-	-	-	-	-	
Beyond Secondary	-	-	-	-	-	
Total	496	587	1083	2.20	100.00	
Total						
Illiterate	1268	1058	2326	4.73	81.53	
Primary	283	151	434	0.88	15.21	
Upto Secondary	53	28	81	0.16	2.84	
Beyond Secondary	4	8	12	0.02	0.42	
Total	1608	1245	2853	5.80	100.00	

Further illiteracy among females is more extensive than among males. As much as 73.09 per cent of the males are illiterate as compared to 95.84 per cent of the females. Few males are educated upto the primary level while education of females above the primary level is nil.

Table 4.3 shows the social categories of the sample households. The Scheduled Caste households constitute 38.01 per cent of the total households. They make up 37.77 per cent of the total population. As compared to Scheduled Caste households, Scheduled Tribe households are only 1.02 per cent of the total constituting a negligible 0.83 per cent of the total population. Backward castes make up as large as 45.93 per cent of the total households which comprise 45.49 per cent of the total sample population. The minority consists of 13.55 per cent of the total population. The upper caste

Table 4.3 : Social Category of the Sample Households

Social Category	No. of Households	Percent-age	No. of Population	Percent-age
Scheduled Caste	187	38.01	1135	37.77
Scheduled Tribe	5	1.02	25	0.83
Backward Caste	226	45.93	1367	45.49
Minority	63	12.80	407	13.55
Upper Caste	41	2.24	71	2.36
Total	492	100.00	3005	100.00

households (2.24 per cent of the sample) as well as population (2.36 per cent of the sample) are small in number. This table shows that the Scheduled and Backward Castes are dominant in our sample.

Table 4.4 shows the education level of the heads of the households in our sample. It is evident from this table that a large number of heads are illiterate. Only 23.88 per cent of the heads of the families are literate. Of the literate lot, only 0.81 per cent are educated above the secondary level, 3.25 per cent educated upto the secondary level and the largest number educated till the primary level or below.

Table 4.4 : Literacy Level of the Head of Household

Literacy Level	No. of Heads	Percentage
Illiterate	375	76.22
Primary level and below	97	19.72
Secondary	16	3.25
More than Secondary	4	0.81
Total	492	100.00

Table 4.5 : Status of Residential Accommodations

Status of House	No. of Households	Percentage
Own House	489	99.39
Rented	3	0.61
Other	-	-
Total	492	100.00

Most of the families have their own houses and only 0.61 per cent of them live in rented ones.

IV.2 Occupational Structure and Mobility

Of the total population in 492 sample households, 57.78 per cent are workers engaged in different occupations. This means that the participation rate of population in labour force is about 52 per cent in Mirzapur.

The occupation-wise distribution of workers, as presented in Table 4.6 shows that about 71 per cent of the total workers are engaged in manufacturing, process, repairs, etc.

About 11 per cent of the total workers are agricultural labourers who work for agricultural wages. A little more than 4 per cent of them are engaged in construction work.

Table 4.6 : Occupational Pattern of the Workers in the Sample Households

Occupation	No. of workers	Percentage of workers	Per HH No. of workers
Cultivator	107	6.88	0.22
Agricultural labourer	170	10.92	0.35
Livestock, Forestry, Fishery, Hunting, etc.	12	0.77	0.02
Mining and Quarrying	27	1.73	0.05
Manufacturing, Processing, Repairs, etc.	1104	70.95	2.24
Construction	65	4.18	0.13
Transport, Storage & Communication	9	0.58	0.02
Trade and Commerce	27	1.74	0.05
Other services	35	2.25	0.07
Total	1556	100.00	3.16

There are 35 workers employed in other services. The rest of them are engaged in other occupations who constitute 5.34 per cent of the total workers. In this way, the number of earning members per household is 3.16. There are also 308 child workers who constitute 39.07 per cent of 1556 total workers.

Table 4.7 shows the occupational mobility of the sample families of Mirzapur district. The table shows that the people of the district are occupationally not very mobile. About 58 per cent of the heads of families of our sample are continuing their grand-father's occupation, about 57 per cent of them are continuing their father's occupation and 27 per cent continuing their mother's occupation. Further about 52 per cent of the child labourers are working in the same profession as their fathers. About 87 per cent of the heads of families of the sample have worked as child labourers, showing the extent and heritage of the problem.

Table 4.7 : Occupational Mobility of the Family

Description	Number	Percentage
Total number of heads in the sample	492	100.00
Heads continuing grandfather's occupation	285	57.93
Heads continuing father's occupation	280	56.91
Heads continuing mother's occupation	133	27.03
Children continuing father's occupation	255	51.83
Heads worked as child labour	426	86.59

In a way, all this reflects a socio-economic process whereby the households with child labour are being reproduced from one generation to another in the study area of Mirzapur.

Table 4.8 shows the migratory status of the sample households of Mirzapur district. As can be easily seen, the migrant population of the sample is very small constituting just 2.85 per cent of the total. Of the total migrants about 43 per cent have migrated from within the district, while 28.57 per cent have migrated from outside the district. Only one family has migrated from within the state while 21.43 per cent constituting only 3 households have migrated from outside the state.

Table 4.8 : Migratory Status of Sample Households

Category	No. of households	Percentage distribution
Non-Migrants	478	97.15
Migrants	14	2.85
a) Within the District	6	42.86
b) Outside the District	4	28.57
c) Within the State	1	7.14
d) Outside the State	3	21.43
Total Sample	492	100.00

IV.3 Pattern and Distribution of Household Income

Data pertaining to the income levels in the sample households reveals that the monthly income per household is about Rs. 1152 from all sources. The level of monthly income per head of the sample population comes to about Rs. 186. There are 608 working children belonging to the sample of 492 households in Mirzapur who are also earning by engaging themselves in different occupations. The monthly income per working child is worked out to be about Rs. 242. In fact, the total monthly income earning by 608 working children constitutes 26 per cent of the total household monthly income from all sources.

Table 4.9 : Income Levels of the Sample Households

Description

Total monthly income of sample households (Rs.)	566679
Total number of households	492
Total population of sample households	3005
Per household monthly income (Rs.)	1151.78
Per capita monthly income (Rs.)	185.58
Total monthly income earned by working children (Rs.)	147380
Total number of working children	608
Monthly income per working child (Rs.)	242.40
Percentage share of income earned by working children	26.40

The distribution of households according to different income size-groups, as presented in Table 4.10, shows that 94.31 per cent of the total households belong to the income size-group of Rs.501-1000 and Rs.1001-2000 taken together. This implies that most of the households have monthly income varying from Rs.500 to Rs.2000. There are only five households (out of 492) whose monthly income is in the range of Rs.3001 to Rs.5000. There is only one household whose monthly income is more than Rs.5000. The income levels of the sample households reveal that the economic condition of most of the households is not sound but weak. Poverty seems to loom large among most of the households.

Table 4.10 : Distribution of Sample Households According to Different Income Size-Groups

Monthly Income Size-Groups (in Rs.)	Households	
	Total Number	Percentage
Less than 500	9	1.83
501 - 1000	240	48.78
1001 - 2000	224	45.53
2001 - 3000	13	2.64
3001 - 5000	5	1.01
More than 5000	1	0.21
All	492	100.00

IV.4 Indebtedness and Consumption Pattern

So far the indebtedness among the sample households is concerned, Table 4.11 indicates that about 15 per cent of them are indebted. The amount of loan per indebted household is worked out to be about Rs.5613. About 30 per cent of the indebted households borrowed money from the landlords and money lenders. Banks/Credit Societies were the major institutions from which about 63 per cent of the indebted households borrowed money. Bank credit amounted to Rs.287600 which was 71.17 per cent of the total credit. The amount of money borrowed from the money lenders was about 11 per cent

Table 4.11 : Level of Indebtedness and Source-wise Distribution of Loans Among Households

Source of Loans	Indebted Households		Amount of Loan Taken	
	Number	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Employer	1	1.39	10000	2.47
Landlord (Land Owner)	11	15.28	48800	12.07
Money Lender	11	15.28	43100	10.66
Traders	-	-	-	-
Bank/Credit Society	45	62.50	287600	71.17
Friends & Relatives	4	5.55	14600	3.61
Others	-	-	-	-
Total	72	100.00	404100	100.00

of total credit; but that amount from the landlord was 12.07 per cent of the total credit. Some of the households were also indebted to the friends-cum-relatives and employers; but their share in total credit was quite small in proportion.

About 60 per cent of the indebted households have availed loans worth Rs.5000 or more. Only 8.33 per cent of them borrowed Rs.1000 or less. Twenty three households took credit ranging from Rs.1000 - Rs.4999. The data makes clear that credit needs of majority of the households warrant larger loans amount.

Table 4.12 : Classification of Households According to Loan Size

Loan Size-Group	No. of HH. Indebted	Percentage
Less than 1000	6	8.33
1000 - 4999	23	31.95
5000 and Above	43	59.72
All	72	100.00

A negligible number of households, merely two are members of credit societies. Neither of the two have taken loans from the society. Low membership can be ascribed to lack of consciousness relating to nature of benefits/assistance which can be procured from such agencies.

Main items of food were listed in the consumption pattern of sample households. In the consumption of cereals wheat forms the principal item of the daily diet of surveyed households, as Table 4.13 indicates. Average monthly consumption of wheat per household is 63.59 Kgs. (10.41 Kgs. per capita). Next to follow are rice, dal, other cereals and oil. The same table shows that dal i.e. pulses and oil form a very small part in the consumption pattern of the sample households.

Table 4.13 : Consumption Pattern of the Sample Households

Item of Consumption	Monthly Consumption (Kgs.)		
	Total	Per Household	Per Capita
Rice	21045	42.77	7.00
Wheat	31265	63.59	10.41
Other Cereals	1337	2.72	0.44
Dal	2470.5	5.02	0.82
Oil	1018	2.07	0.34

IV.5 Child Population and Supply of Child Labour

The composition of child population and child labour in the sample households shows that 54.28 per cent of the total population are children. Male children outnumber female children, being 60.52 per cent and 44.22 per cent of the

child population respectively (Table 4.14). As has been mentioned that the supply of child labour has been from one generation to another. Each and every family in the poor section of society has engaged its children as child labour. In the total sample of 492 households, the number of working children is 608, registering 1.24 child workers per household. In fact, a little more than 37 per cent of the total child population is working as child labour in different occupations. Among the male children, the ratio of child labour is worked out to be 51.34 per cent. However, the corresponding figure for female children is 6.29 per cent, as Table 4.14 indicates. This comparative picture shows that more than half of the male children are child workers engaged in one occupation or other.

Table 4.14 : Composition of Child Population and Child Labour in the Sample Households

Description	Composition of Child Population and Child Labour		
	Male	Female	Total
Total child population (Below 14 years)	1122	509	1631
Percentage of child population to total population	60.52	44.22	54.28
Number of child workers	576	32	608
Percentage of child workers in total child population	51.34	6.29	32.28

Why the households or families supply their children for work in the labour market, date were collected from the households in order to comprehend the reasons for sending their children to work. Different reasons were reported by the households for engaging their children as child labour. Most of the households, which constitute about 97 per cent of the 492 households, were not in a position to meet their basic subsistence requirements, needed supplementary income. And so they did not have any alternative, excepting that they could send their children to earn incomes. In Mirzapur, not a single household reported the reasons (3) and (4) for the supply of child labour, as Table 4.15 indicates.

Table 4.15 : Reasons for Working as Child Labour

Reasons for working as child labour	No. of working children	Percentage
No other earning member	3	0.49
Need for supplementary income	589	96.88
Father/mother alcoholic	-	-
Parents handicapped	-	-
Acquisition of skill	10	1.64
Others	6	0.99
Total	608	100.00

Need to acquire skill in order to increase their market value induced 1.64 per cent to work. Few (0.49 per cent) had to work as they were the sole earning member of the family. A little more 2 per cent of them also mentioned some other reasons for sending their children to work.

There are 1.24 working children per household. Of the 608 working children, 433 (71.21 per cent) never attended school. The 116 children dropped out leaving merely 9.53 per cent school goers. Only one received informal education.

It is disappointing to note that 19.07 per cent children had to discontinue education. Out of 116 drop outs 59.49 per cent had to leave school as they could not afford education expenses due to poverty. Parental pressure to work deprived 6.03 per cent of children. Death of either parent burdened 5.17 per cent with extra work forcing them to stop studies. But a disturbing 29.31 per cent dropped out simply because they had no interest in studies.

There is a preponderence of skilled child workers in the sample of working children. About 94 per cent of them are skilled children engaged for wages in village and small scale industries. Just 6.09 per cent of them are unskilled. No child worker is reported to have performed household work along with the work in which he/she is engaged (Table 4.16).

Data pertaining to household income and proportion of working children in the total number of children reveals that lower is the household income, higher is the proportion of

Table 4.16 : Activities in which Working Children are Emerged

Type of Work	No. of Working			Percentage		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Unpaid Household work	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skill Training Outside the family	-	-	-	-	-	-
Skilled work for wage in village and small scale industries	552	19	571	96.00	57.58	93.91
Unskilled work for wages	23	14	37	4.00	42.42	6.09
Total	575	33	608	100.00	100.0	100.0

child workers to the total number of children. Table 4.17 shows that 37.28 per cent of the total child population are the child workers. The proportion of child workers in the total number of children is found 50 per cent in the households which have monthly income less than Rs.500. This percentage falls to 34.62 when the income increases to between Rs.2001 to 3000. Again the proportion of child workers to the total number of children goes down to 28 per cent when the monthly household income goes upto between Rs.3001 to 5000. There is only one household whose income is Rs.5000 and more and only one child, out of 3, is found to have worked as child labour. Thus the inverse relationship between household income and child labour, as Table 4.17 indicates that the households with a lower income supply more

Table 4.17 : Level of Family Income and Working Children

Monthly Income of Household (Rs.)	No. of House- holds	No. of Children (Below 14 Years)	No. of Working Children (Below 14 Years)	Percentage of Working Children in Total Children (Below 14 years)
Less than 500	9	18	9	50.00
501 - 1000	240	752	281	37.37
1001 - 2000	224	781	292	37.38
2001 - 3000	13	52	18	34.62
3001 - 5000	5	25	7	28.00
Above 5000	1	3	1	33.34
Total	492	1631	608	37.28

child labour than those with a higher income. In other words, the extent of poverty among them is the cause for the supply of child labour for work in the labour market.

Apart from other factors responsible for the emergence of child labour, the educational level of head of household has also its influence in the determination of child as child labour. The survey data of the households also exhibit this clue. The relationship of the education of the head of household with the proportion of child labour in the total children shows that highr the educational level of the head household, lower the proportion of child labour.

Table 4.18 shows that the illiterate household's heads, which constitute 76.22 per cent of their total number (i.e. 492), have about 72 per cent of their total children as illiterate and about 76 per cent of their total child workers as illiterate. The literate heads of the households (i.e. those with primary education below) are about 20 per cent of the total number of the households' heads and they have about 24 per cent of their total children with primary education below and 20.23 per cent of their child workers with the same level of education. The heads of the households with upto and above secondary education are quite small in number and proportion. All this reflects that illiteracy has deep roots among the heads of households of the working children which has also bearing on the supply of child labour.

Table 4.18 : Educational Level of the Head of Households and Working Children

Educational Level	No. of heads of Households	No. of Children of 14 Years	No. of Working Children (Below 14 Years)	Percentage of Working Children in Total Children (Below 14 years)
Illiterate	375	1170	460	30.32
Primary and Below	97	385	123	31.95
More than primary & Upto Secondary	16	58	19	32.76
Beyond Secondary	14	18	6	33.33
Total	492	1631	608	37.28

An attempt is also made to analyse the data on working children in the sample households to find out whether the family size is one of the factors also responsible for child labour. The analysis of data regarding the family size and rate of working children indicates an inverse relationship between the family size and the work participation rate among the children.

Table 4.19 shows the inverse relationship between the household size (i.e., the number of members in the household) and the percentage of working children in the total children below 14 years. As the size of the family increases the

Table 4.19 : Family Size and Working Children in the Sample Households

Household Size Group (No. of Members)	No. of Households	No. of Children (Below 14 Years)	No. of Working Children (Below 14 Years)	Percentage of Working Children in Total Children (Below 14 years)
Upto 3	40	50	48	96.00
3 - 6	273	750	331	44.13
6 - 9	145	620	186	30.00
9 - 12	24	431	30	22.90
12 - 15	4	28	4	14.29
Above 15	6	52	9	17.31
Total	492	1631	608	37.28

percentage of working children in the total children below 14 years decreases. The reasons behind this could be many and varied. Families having only three members send 96 per cent of their total children below 14 years to work. This percentage falls drastically to 44.13 per cent when the number of members increases to between 3-6. The percentage of working children in the total children below 14 years falls to a mere 17.31 pr cent when the number of members in the family are above 15.

In the households of smaller family sizes, the factors like, small proportion of adult members in the family composition, absence of adult earning members, due to death, old age, sickness and alcoholism are responsible for the higher percentage of working children in the total number of children.

IV.5 Main Points

The data analysis specific to the socio-economic background of the sample households and to the supply aspect of child labour at the household level reveals the following:

Firstly, a little more than 83 per cent of the total households belong to the scheduled and backward castes and about 14 per cent of them are Muslims.

Secondly, about 84 per cent of the total population in the sample households illiterate and 15.21 per cent of the

total population is literate in the sense of having primary level education. A very small proportion of the population (3.26 per cent) is having upto secondary education and above it. Similarly, 76.22 per cent of the total number of the heads of the sample households are illiterate and above 20 per cent of them have primary level education and below. This means that a majority of the household's heads are illiterate.

Thirdly, the household income level shows that most of the households are not economically sound but weak and poor. The monthly consumption pattern of the households also supports this fact. The proportion of the indebted households in the total sample is not more than 15 per cent. But the nature of their bondage to debts reflects a somewhat precarious.

Fourthly, there are 1556 workers engaged in different occupations who constitute about 52 per cent of the total population. Most of the workers (i.e. about 72 per cent) are employed in manufacturing, processing and repairs (i.e. unorganised sector). The occupational mobility of the heads of 492 households shows their immobility because most of them are continuing their respective occupations from one generation to another and about 87 per cent of them worked as child labour in the past. The occupational immobility and having worked as child labour in the past in fact reflects that type of socio-economic system which is reproducing such households and child labour even today. Most of the

households are found to be non-migrant and only about 3 per cent of the sample households migrated from within the district, outside the district, within and outside the state.

Fifthly, there are 608 child workers in the sample households who constitute 20.23 per cent of their total population and 37.28 per cent of the total child population in the sample. Most of the child workers (i.e. 94 per cent) are found to have been engaged in skilled work and the rest are doing unskilled work. Most of the child workers (71.21 per cent) are illiterate, as they never attended school. The children, numbered 116, dropped out because they were not in position to continue their education due to poverty. Sixthly, an inverse relationship between the family size and the proportion of working children is also found in Mirzapur.

Finally, why the households supply child labour is found to be on account of the prevalence of poverty among them. Table 4.15 indicates that about 97 per cent of the sample households reported the need for supplementing income as the main cause for sending their children to work for wage income. What all this shows is the reproduction of the households and their child labour, corresponding to the socio-economic system in which they are placed and work for subsistence.

CHAPTER V

Socio-Economic Conditions of Working Children and Their Labour Use

In the last chapter, we studied the socio-economic background of the 492 families which send their children to work. We saw the socio-economic status of the families, the health and educational status of their members and heads, and the general environment in which the children live. Why these households supply their child labour for wages in the labour market, is also discussed in the foregoing chapter.

In this chapter we shall study the status of the child in his work and his labour use. As we already know, all the 492 children work in the carpet industry of Mirzapur. The workers are of both the sexes and are between the age group of 7 to 14 years. Most of them are illiterate and in poor health, and very few of them have even attended school, but work because of the poor socio-economic status of their families. Most of the children live with their parents and are grossly underpaid by their employers. But since they are illiterate and needy they work for meagre wages. Most of the children have no past experience of work but they like working because it means, to them, some pocket money which they can spend on entertainment, snacks and movies. Female workers in the industry are few and illiterate because of the conservative attitude of the parents. We shall now study the

status of the child workers, their labour use, and the perception and attitude of the working children concerning the supply and use of their labour.

V.1 Age-Sex-wise Distribution, Educational and Occupational Characteristics

Table 5.1 shows the age and sex wise distribution of child workers in the sample of the carpet industry of Mirzapur. The maximum number of child workers are in the age group of 11-14 years while no children come under the very small age group of 4-7 years. As can be seen clearly from the table, the number of male labourers far exceed the number of female workers in the sample. The female workers constitute just 5 per cent of the total.

Table 5.1 : Age and Sex-wise Distribution of Child Workers

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
4 - 7	-	-	-
7 - 11	51 (10.87)	10 (43.48)	61 (12.40)
11 - 14	418 (89.13)	13 (46.52)	431 (87.60)
All Groups	469 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	492 (100.0)

Note : Figures within brackets refer to percentages.

Table 5.2 shows the age of entry of the working child in the present job. The table shows that of the total 492 children of the sample, 381 entered the job between the age of 7-11 years while only 20 per cent of the workers in the sample entered the job at the age of 11-14 years. Thus it can be seen clearly that most of the children in the sample entered the present job between the age group of 7-11 years. Female workers in the sample are few and most of them entered the present job at 7-11 years of age.

Table 5.2 : Distribution of working children According to Age of Entry into the Present Job

Age Entry Group	Male	Female	Total
4 - 7	11 (3.30)	-	11 (2.40)
7 - 11	362 (77.19)	19 (22.61)	381 (77.44)
11 - 14	96 (19.51)	4 (17.39)	100 (20.36)
All Groups	469 (100.00)	23 (100.00)	492 (100.00)

Note : Figures within brackets refer to percentages.

Table 5.3 shows the educational status of the working children according to age and sex. There are no children below the age of 6 years in the sample. Only 17 children in the 7-11 years age group and 138 children in the 11-14 years group are educated. About 69 per cent of the children in the sample are illiterate. Of the literate children, only 17 have been educated upto the secondary level. The rest of

Table 5.3 : Educational Status of Working Children According to Age and Sex

Age and Sex	Illite-rate	Primary Level & Below	Upto Se- condary Level	Beyond Se- condary Level	Total
<u>Upto 6 years</u>					
Male	-	-	-	-	-
Female	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-
<u>7-11 years</u>					
Male	37	15	-	-	52
Female	8	2	-	-	10
Total	45	17	-	-	62
<u>11-14 years</u>					
Male	281	119	17	-	417
Female	11	2	-	-	13
Total	292	121	17	-	430
<u>All Groups</u>					
Male	318	134	17	-	469
Female	19	4	-	-	23
Total	337	138	17	-	492

them are educated below or till the primary level. Among female workers only 4 out of the 23 have been educated below the primary level.

Table 5.4 shows the schooling status of the working children in the sample. The table reflects clearly the

Table 5.4 : Schooling Status of Working Children

Schooling Status	Number	Percentage
1. Still attending school	38	7.72
2. Never attending school	337	68.50
3. Attended but dropped out	117	23.78
Total	492	100.00

illiteracy of the children working in the industry and a non-serious attitude towards education. About 69 per cent of the child workers in the sample have never attended school, while about 24 per cent of them have dropped out from the school. It means less of time which can be utilized for work and thus less of money. Again going to school would mean no profit bearing expenditure education from the point of view the parents, because of their poverty to meet the expenditure. Only a small number (5 per cent of the child workers) are attending formal school.

Table 5.5 shows the details of past work experience of the sample child workers. As is evident from the table, no female worker has work experience of any kind, while among the male workers only 29 have experience. About 94 per cent of the children have no past work experience at all.

Table 5.5 : Details of Work Experience of Child Workers
in the Past

Age Groups	Worked			Not Worked			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
4- 7 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7-11 years	1	1	51	10	61	3.45	-	3.45	
11-14 years	28	28	389	13	402	96.55	-	96.55	
All Groups	29	29	440	23	463	100.00	-	100.00	

Table 5.6 tells us why the child workers in the sample left their past job. Of the 492 workers in the sample, only 29 left their jobs to join the carpet industry. The most

Table 5.6 : Reason-wise Distribution of Working Children
Related to Past Job

Reasons for leaving the past job	Number	Percentage
1. Work was not always available	-	-
2. Started to go to school	-	-
3. The industry was closed	1	3.45
4. Low wages were given	9	31.05
5. Work was too much	-	-
6. Wages were not being paid	5	17.24
7. Work place was at a long distance	8	27.59
8. Work was not given	1	3.45
9. The advance money was not given	5	17.24
TOTAL	29	100.00

popular reasons with the workers for leaving their past jobs seem to be the low wages paid to them in their previous jobs and the long distance involved in going to their workplaces. Other reasons for leaving the job are : advance money was not given, wages were not paid for work done and the industry where the child worked was closed down.

When we look at the work status of the working children in the sample, we find that of the total 492 child workers interviewed, all are paid wages but just about 12 per cent of them are currently receiving training while on the job.

Table 5.7 : Status of Child Workers

1. Total Number of Child Workers in the Sample	492
2. Number of Child Workers under Training	57
3. Percentage of Workers under Training	11.59
4. Number of Child Workers who are paid	492
5. Percentage of workers paid	100.00

Most of the children (about 98 per cent) live in the secure environment of their own houses with their parents. Only 10 children live with their relatives.

Table 5.8 : Housing/Accommodation Facilities for the Working Children

Working Children Living With	Number	Percentage
1. Parents	482	97.97
2. Relatives	10	2.03
3. Shelter/Children's Home	—	—
4. Staying alone	—	—
Total	492	100.00

Data on the distance of working place and mode of transport used by the working children reveal that most of them (i.e. 405 out of 492) do not commute to work as they are working at home (Table 5.9). As has been mentioned somewhere else, that the carpet weaving process is carried out at the household level and the children work mostly at homes. There are only 55 and 28 children, who go on foot to their respective work places by covering distance of from less than 1 km. to 3 kms. away from their houses. There are only three children who go by by-cycle to cover a distance of 3 kms. and above.

Table 5.9 : Distance of Working Place and Mode of Transport Used by the Children

Distance (Kms.)	Number of Working Children				
	Working at Home	Walk	Bycycle	Bus	Others
Zero distance (Working at Home)	405	—	—	—	—
Less than one Km.	—	55	1	—	—
1 Km. to 3 Kms.	—	28	1	—	—
3 Kms. and Above	—	1	1	—	—
Total	405	84	3	—	—

V.2 Pattern of Wage Income and Child Labour Use

The income size-wise distribution of the working children shows that 88.43 per cent of the total children get

income ranging from Rs.75 to Rs.400 per month. There are only about 10 per cent and 1.01 per cent working children whose income levels fall in the income size-groups of Rs.400 to Rs.500 and Rs.500-600. There are also four children whose monthly income is less than Rs.75. The monthly income per child worker is worked out to be about Rs.300 and so the daily income per child worker is about Rs.10. Table 5.10 shows a wide range of variations in the monthly and daily

Table 5.10 : Income Size-wise Distribution of Working Children and Level of Monthly and Daily Income Per Child Worker

Income Group (Rs.)	No. of Child- ren	Total Monthly (abso- lute) (Rs.)	Total Monthly Income (Rs.)	Average Salary Per Child (Rs.)
0 - 75	4(0.80)	245	61.25	2.04
75 - 150	54(10.98)	7200	133.33	4.44
150 - 200	95(19.31)	19000	200.00	6.67
200 - 300	182(37.00)	53266	292.67	9.76
300 - 400	104(21.14)	40821	392.51	13.09
400 - 500	48(9.76)	23898	497.88	16.60
500 - 600	5(1.01)	2950	590.00	19.67
600 - 700	-	-	-	-
700 - 800	-	-	-	-
800+	-	-	-	-
Total	492(100.00)	147360	299.55	9.99

wage per working child, from Rs.61.25 to Rs.590 and from Rs.2 to about Rs.20 respectively in the carpet industry of Mirzapur. The same table also reflects gross under-payment of the working children in the carpet industry of Mirzapur.

The level of wage income among the working children depends the duration of work, level of skill, nature of work, age of child and the establishment where the child gets employment.

The child labour employed in the Mirzapur carpet industry is clearly an overtaxed lot. Out of the total 40.05 per cent have to suffer the indignity of working for inhumanly long 8-10 hours a day. About 9.75 per cent of them work even longer, more than 10 hours a day. The inhuman and

Table 5.14 : Distribution of Working Children According to Working Hours Per Day

Hours Worked Per Day (Number)	Number of Children	Percentage
0 - 2	-	"
2 - 4	11	2.23
4 - 6	69	14.02
6 - 8	167	33.95
8 - 10	197	40.05
10 +	48	9.75
Total	492	100.00

unjust attitude of the employers infringe upon the child's right to a healthy and dignified existence. The seriousness and impropriety of the problem deepens further as more than eighty per cent (82.32 per cent) of these children contribute their labour to family owned firms. For these children charity does not begin at home. Such inconsiderate business practices are contemptuous and merit stringent action. There appear to be very few employers who make the children employed in by them work for shorter hours. Just 2.23 per cent work for 2-4 hours a day but none for less than 2 hours. Moreover, there seems to be a parallelism between duration of work and exploitation. With the increasing working hour, there is a corresponding increase in the number of working children.

Given different income groups (i.e. assuming constant income), we observe from Table 5.12 that a large number of the working children have to sweat for longer hours per day for the same income. About of 90 per cent of the 110 working children belonging to the income group of Rs.150 to 200 put in 6 hours to over 10 hours per day for the same income level. A little more than 47 per cent of the same number of working children work more than 8 hours per day. Similarly, 60.35 per cent of the 179 working children in the income size group of Rs.200 to 300 work from 8 hours to over 10 hours per day for the same income. A little more than 62 per cent of the 95 working children with income size of Rs.300 to 400 put in more than 8 hours of work per day for the same income.

Table 5.12 : Classification of Working Children According to Working Hours Per Day and Its Relationship with Income Levels

No. of Hours Worked Per Day	Monthly Income of the Working Child (Rs.)									Total
	0 - 75	75 - 150	150-200	200-300	300-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-800	
0 - 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 - 4	-	3 (5.36)	7 (6.36)	1 (0.56)	-	-	-	-	-	11 (2.24)
4 - 6	2 (33.33)	21 (37.50)	14 (12.73)	19 (10.61)	5 (5.26)	8 (19.51)	-	-	-	69 (14.02)
6 - 8	1 (16.67)	22 (39.29)	37 (33.64)	51 (28.49)	31 (32.63)	22 (53.66)	3 (60.00)	-	-	167 (33.94)
8 - 10	1 (16.67)	6 (10.71)	33 (30.00)	92 (51.40)	52 (54.74)	11 (26.83)	2 (40.00)	-	-	197 (40.04)
10+	2 (33.33)	4 (7.14)	19 (17.27)	16 (8.94)	7 (3.37)	-	-	-	-	48 (9.76)
Total	6 (100.00)	56 (100.00)	110 (100.00)	179 (100.00)	95 (100.00)	41 (100.00)	5 (100.00)	-	-	492 (100.00)

Note : Figures in parentheses refer to percentages.

Table 5.12 by and large, reflects that in most cases a large number of the working children work for longer hours per day in order to get a given income level. In other words, it also measures the exploitation of child labour in terms of lengthening the duration of work by the employer.

Table 5.13 also indicates how the working children are underpaid and exploited. In this table, the duration of workers is kept constant and the income is held as a variable. We observe here that a large number of the working children get less payment for the same number of working hours. The working children, numbered 197, work for 8 to 10 hours per day; but 63.45 per cent of them get an income between Rs.150 to 300. Similarly, about 4 per cent and about 33 per cent of them get an income for the same working hours between Rs. 0 to 150 and Rs.300 to 600 respectively. In this way, the figures in the horizontal rows of Table 5.13 indicate how a large number of the working children get less income by putting in the same working hours in their work process. All this reflects the extent of underpayment and exploitation of child labour in the carpet industry.

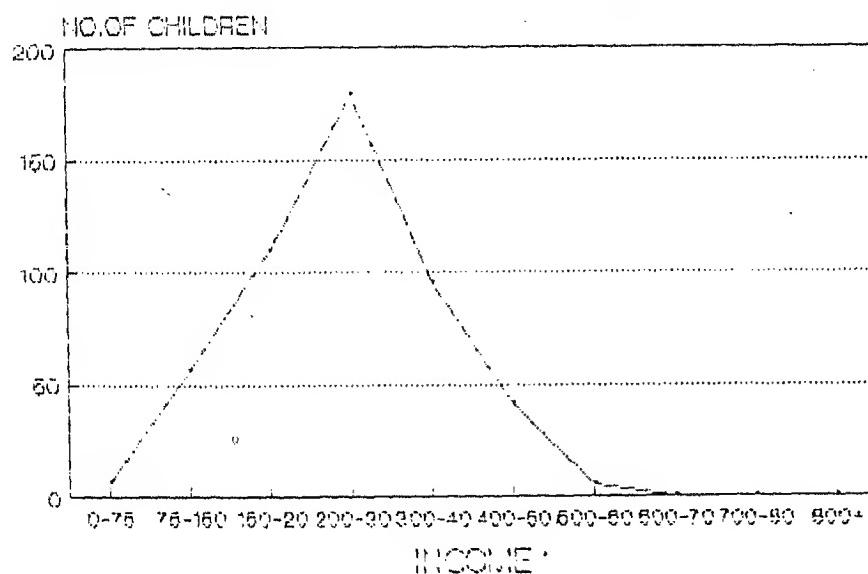
The status of working children can be also reflected by the pattern of wage collection among them to some extent. Similarly, it gives some clue about the exploitation and attitude of parents towards their children. It is irony that the working children do not have right on the income earned by them on the one hand and the keen concern of parents on the earning of their children as well as the economic

Table 5.13 : Classification of Working Children According to Different Levels of Monthly Income and Its Relationship Working Hours Per day

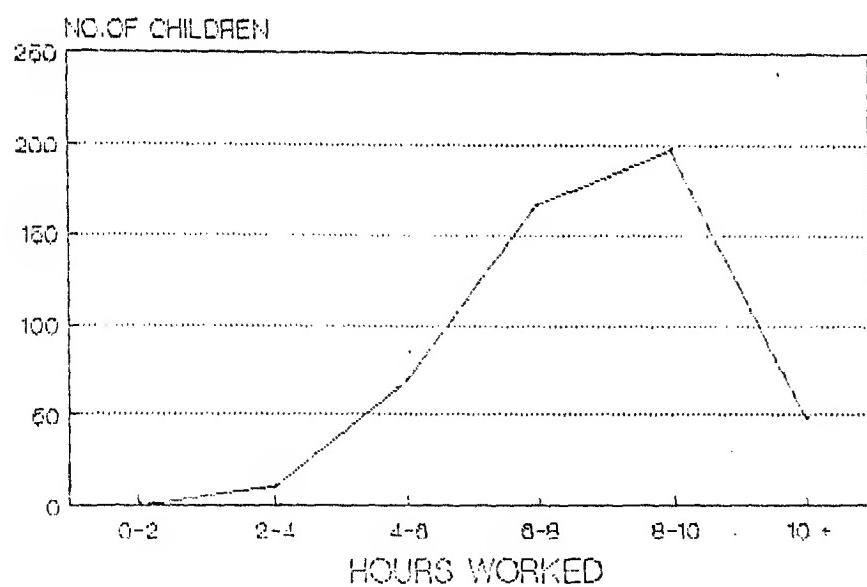
No. of Hours Worked Per Day	Monthly Income of the Working Child (Rs.)									Total
	0 - 75	75 - 150	150-200	200-300	300-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-800	
0 - 2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 - 4	-	3 (27.28)	7 (63.63)	1 (9.09)	-	-	-	-	-	11 (100.00)
4 - 6	2 (2.89)	21 (30.44)	14 (20.29)	19 (27.54)	5 (7.25)	8 (11.59)	-	-	-	69 (100.00)
6 - 8	1 (0.59)	22 (13.18)	37 (22.15)	51 (30.54)	31 (18.57)	22 (13.18)	3 (1.79)	-	-	167 (100.00)
8 - 10	1 (0.50)	6 (3.05)	33 (16.76)	92 (46.70)	52 (26.39)	11 (5.59)	2 (1.01)	-	-	197 (100.00)
10+	2 (4.16)	4 (8.33)	19 (39.59)	16 (33.33)	7 (14.59)	-	-	-	-	48 (100.00)
Total	6 (1.21)	56 (11.39)	110 (22.36)	179 (36.39)	95 (19.20)	41 (8.34)	5 (1.01)	-	-	492 (100.00)

Note : Figures in parentheses refer to percentages.

RELATION BETWEEN INCOME AND CHILD WORKERS IN MIRZAPUR



RELATION BETWEEN WORKING HOURS AND CHILD WORKERS IN MIRZAPUR



condition of the households on the other. Table 5.14 shows that about 18 per cent of the children get their wages by themselves from the employers, while 76 per cent of them reported that their wages are collected by their parents. A little more than 6 per cent of them also mentioned that their local guardians collect their wages on their behalf from the employers. Such a mode of wage collection in fact veils other exploitative practices which may be in operation due to the advance of money to their parents in order to make them bonded to debts as a security to ensure the supply of child labour for the employers.

Table 5.14 : Pattern of Collection of Wages by Child Workers

Collection of Wages by	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
Self	88	17.88
Parents	374	76.02
Local Guardians	30	6.10
Others	-	-
Total	492	100.00

Let us see how much of the wage income earned by the working children is spent by them as a pocket money. It is observed that the child workers in the sample earn around Rs.300 per month but they get a mere Rs.25 on an average as

pocket money. The money is given or taken away by parents, due to extreme poverty, to meet basic needs.

Table 5.15 indicates that, 420 child workers out of the total sample of 492 get pocket money. A little more 25 per cent of them get between Rs.31 to Rs.40, while 23 per cent get between Rs.11 to Rs.20, showing the meagre amount parents give to their children due to extreme poverty.

Table 5.15 : Distribution of Child Workers According to Level of Pocket Money

Level of Pocket Money	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
Upto Rs.10	75	17.86
Rs.11 to Rs.20	115	27.38
Rs.21 to Rs.30	102	24.28
Rs.31 to Rs.40	4	0.96
Rs.41 and above	124	29.52
Total	420	100.00

Data are also collected from the working children about the items on which they generally spend their pocket money. A large majority of them, 87 per cent, spend most of their money on snacks, while 28 per cent spend mostly on entertainment. A part of the pocket money is also spent on smoking and tobacco, as 13.41 per cent of the working children reported.

It is also observed that saving habits have not been inculcated in the child workers taken in the sample. The workers simply live from hand to mouth and spend all they earn.

V.3 Children's Perception and Attitude Towards Their Work and Use

The foregoing analysis has thrown light on the status, use and exploitation of child labour in the carpet industry of Mirzapur. In this section, the perception and attitude of the working children towards their work and use is discussed on the basis of our relevant field data.

During the discussions with the working children, it was observed that the work is not liked by many of the working children. They do not like to work in their childhood. But their dislike for the work in which they are engaged is subordinated to their family conditions. Therefore, many of

Table 5.16 : Attitude of Child Towards Work

Attitude of Child	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
Number of Child Workers in the Sample	492	100.00
Number of Child workers who like to work	322	65.45
Number of child workers who do not like to work	170	34.55

them are not in position to be categorical in this regard, as they do not have any scale of preference. That is why only about 35 per cent of the total working children dislike work and the rest of them liked it.

Among those who did not like the job, about 88 per cent of them reported low wages but more work as the cause for their dislike. A little more than 8 per cent of them mentioned the dangerous-cum-injurious nature of work responsible for disliking the job. A few of them also reported the nature of work having injurious to their health as the cause for their dislike.

Table 5.17 : Reasons for Not-liking Work

Reasons for Not Liking Work	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
Dangerous or injurious work	15	8.29
Low wages and more work	148	87.57
Work is being done at night	-	-
Wants to go to school	1	0.59
Work leads to body pain	6	3.55
Work leads to deterioration to health	-	-
Total	170	100.00

There are 322 working children who expressed their liking for the present job. Table 5.18 indicates that about 90 per cent of them like to work because they want to earn money. Some children have other reasons for working. They work because the work is not dangerous or because they are eager to work or because the work is easily available in their locality or at home.

Table 5.18 : Reasons for Liking Work

Reasons for Liking Work	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
To earn money	290	90.06
No dangerous	16	4.97
Eager to work	3	0.93
Work is easily available in the locality or at home	13	4.04

The 170 working children who expressed their dislike for the present job were asked to understand the reasons for working on the present job, despite their disliking for it. Table 5.19 indicate the existence of poverty among them as the most important reason for working them in the present occupation. The rest of them reported some other reasons but all of them are related to the socio-economic conditions in which they have to work for subsistence. In other words, their prevailing poor socio-economic lot is the main cause for them to work.

Table 5.19 : Socio-Economic Compulsions for Working Child

Work Compulsion	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
Poverty	148	87.06
Parents sickness or death	8	4.71
Compulsion from parents	5	2.94
To supplement household income	9	5.29
Total	170	100.00

As evident from the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the working children do not have any scale of preference or choice because of their socio-economic conditions. The Table 5.19 shows the socio-economic compulsions to work and earn for supporting their families for subsistence existence. However, we wanted to comprehend

Table 5.20 : Aspiration/Preference of Working Child Regarding Work

Description	Number of Child Workers	Percentage
Likes to continue work	309	62.80
Likes to get more training	76	15.45
Wants to switch over	95	19.31
Wants to go back to school	12	2.44
Total	492	100.00

the perception or preference of the working children about their work. About 62 per cent of the total working children reported that they would like to continue the work. There were only 12 children who expressed their preference for education. The rest of them want more training or to switch over to some other job.

None of the children working in carpet weaving industry gets weekly holidays. Working all 30 days in a month spoils their health. It is, therefore, apt to say here that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". Carpet weaving is a complex and complicated job which is done best in day light. All the children working in this industry work during the day.

Table 5.21 : Timings of Work and Weekly Holidays

Description	Working Children	
	Number	Percentage
Child labour reporting provision of weekly holidays	--	--
Child workers working during day time	492	100.00
Child workers working during night time	--	--
Child Workers working during other time	--	--

In fact, they do not get holiday and work at day time because the carpet weaving work is done at the household and they have to work for wages at a given rate or on piece-meal basis, depending upon the nature of contract with the manufacturer mediated through the middlemen.

Table 5.22 shows that as many as 72.15 per cent of the children spend leisure hours on playing. Quite a few (47.35 per cent) like to roam around either alone or with friends in the fields and around the village and some (34.34 per cent) take rest. A few like to spend this time gossiping with friends and only two of them spend their leisure in reading. In fact, having put in a long duration of work they rarely get leisure except in case of having no work given to them by the manufacturer.

Table 5.22 : Ways of Spending Leisure Time

Description	Working Children	
	Number	Percentage
Playing	355	72.15
Walking/Roaming	233	47.35
Taking Rest	167	34.34
Reading	2	0.40
Gossiping	6	1.21

Note : Multi-responses are given by the working children so far ways of spending leisure time is concerned.

Besides bringing home their share of the family income many children help their parents with household chores too. Maximum (29.67 per cent) assist in the fields, taking active part in clearing, weeding etc. and grazing the cattle. Some (14.43 per cent) collect water and cooking fuel while 7.11 per cent of them help by bringing things from the market (Table 5.23).

Table 5.23 : Nature of Household Work Done By Child Labour

Nature of Work	Working Children	
	Number	Percentage
To bring things from the market	35	7.11
To collect water and cooking fuel	71	14.43
Work related with agriculture and animal husbandry	146	29.67

In Mirzapur only 7.12 pr cent of the children attended school while working. This low percentage reflects on the lack of awareness regarding benefits of education among families. Most of the employed children were trained (88.42 per cent) while about 8 per cent of them were under training, leaving only 3.65 per cent untrained. This high rate of skilled workers is a must as carpet weaving is a highly specialised industry.

Table 5.24 : Skill and Vocational Status of Working Children

Description	Working Children	
	Number	Percentage
Total number of working children	492	100.00
Child workers till attending school while working	38	7.72
Untrained child workers	18	3.66
Child workers under training	39	7.92
Trained child workers	435	88.42

V.4 The Main Points

The present chapter is a most vital part of the study. The age-sex-wise distribution of the working children shows that about 88 per cent of the total working children belong to the age-group of 11-14 years and most of them are male children. A little more than 77 per cent of them have entered the present job at the age of 7 to 11 years. About 3 per cent of them have also entered the job at the age of 4-7 years.

About 69 per cent of the total 492 working children are illiterate and 138 of them are semi-literate in the sense that they have upto primary level education. This means that a majority of them are illiterate.

About 67 per cent of them never attended the school and about 24 per cent of them dropped out from school. Only 38 children of the total are still attending the school while on the job.

Only 29 children (out of 492) have past work experience, most of these children reported the closure of the industry, a long distance and non-payment of wages as the main causes for leaving the past job.

All the working children in the sample are paid and about 12 per cent of them are still under training. Most of them live with their parents in their own houses. Only a few live with their relatives. Given the nature and form of production in the carpet industry (as discussed in Chapter III), most of the children work at home and they do not commute. There are 87 children who do not work at their own houses/villages and so most of them go by walk to their work places.

The income size (or level) wise distribution of the working children shows that a majority of the working children (i.e. 86.43 per cent) do not get monthly income more than from Rs.75 to 400. There are few whose monthly income falls in the category of Rs.400-500 and Rs.500-600. In this way, the monthly income per working child is worked out to be about Rs.300 and the daily wage income is about Rs.10. About 50 per cent of the total working children work more than 8 hours. About 34 per cent of them work 6 to 8 hours per day.

In this way, it is observed that most of the working children work varying from 6 to 10 + hours per day in order to get some wages.

The relationship between the working hours and income of the working children reflects two things, firstly, in most case a large number of the children work for longer hours per day in order to get a given wage income and secondly, a large number of them get less income by putting in the same working hours per day. Tables 5.12 and 5.13 in fact show the extent of underpayment ad exploitation of child labour in the carpet industry.

The children work for a longer duration but are paid less. At the same time, they do not have right on their own wage income as the wages earnd by them are not collected by them from the employers. In most cases, their parents and relatives collected their wages from the employers on their behalf. On an average, they earn Rs.300 per month but 420 children in the total sample get Rs. 25 per child as a monthly pocket money. However, the distribution of the working children according to different levels of pocket money shows that about 30 per cent of them are given more than Rs.40 as monthly pocket money and most of them get varying from less than Rs.10 to Rs.30. Most of them reported to have spent their pocket money on snacks and some of them also mentioned the spending of their pocket money in smoking and gambling.

The perception and attitude of the working children about their work and use make us clear that they do not have preference or choice, except to work for wages due to their poverty and socio-economic compulsions from which they suffer. However, we made an attempt to show those who dislike the work and those who like it, and to comprehend the causes for their respective dislike and like for the work. A synthetic analysis of both (i.e. those who like and those who dislike the work) indicates that the extent of poverty and the socio-economic compulsions prevailing among the working children and their families make them work for wages.

Briefly speaking, the supply of child labour is a product of socio-economic compulsions from which the working children and their families suffer; and the exploitation of child labour appears to a product of the socio-economic structure of production in which it is used and employed.

CHAPTER VI

Physical Development, Health Hazards and Social Infrastructure

This chapter throws light on the child workers of Mirzapur carpet weaving industry. These overburdened children are far from healthy atmosphere. Malnutrition and overwork are leading to their steady and silent physical degeneration. Disease and illnesses resulting from poor diet and occupational hazards have far reaching consequences on these children i.e. weak child labour graduates to a weaker adult labour force further reducing its efficiency and thereby its remuneration. To counter these problems the government has started welfare schemes and programmes in good faith. But the response to these well meaning efforts has left most of the targeted population untouched and will become clear as we proceed with the chapter. Labour laws and their clauses are known just to a handful of the sample respondents. Ignorance for them is not bliss as it makes way for easy exploitation by employers. In a way, this chapter makes an attempt to discuss the implications of the abuse of child labour on the physical development and health of the working children, the availability of social infrastructures and utilisation to benefit them at Mirzapur.

VI.1 Physical Development

Let us begin with the case of physical development of the working children. Weight and height are taken to be good

Table 6.1 : Classification of Working Children According to
Age-sex wise Standard Weights

Age (Yrs)	Sex	Stan- dard Weight (kgs.)	No. of Working Children				Total
			With Stan- dard Weight	Less Than Stan- dard Weight	More Than Stan- dard Weight	Total	
6	M	22	-	-	-	-	-
	F	21	-	-	-	-	-
7	M	25	-	-	-	-	-
	F	25	-	-	-	-	-
8	M	26	-	7	3	10	-
	F	26	-	3	-	3	-
9	M	30	-	8	4	12	-
	F	27	-	-	2	2	-
10	M	32	-	24	6	30	-
	F	33	-	5	-	5	-
11	M	35	4	34	10	48	-
	F	37	-	2	-	2	-
12	M	39	1	111	17	129	-
	F	43	-	7	-	7	-
13	M	42	10	206	12	230	-
	F	49	-	4	-	4	-
14	M	45	-	10	-	10	-
	F	54	-	-	-	-	-
Total			15	423	54	492	

enough to measure the physical development of the working children. The age-wise medically prescribed standard norms of weight and height were taken from Davison's Principles and Practice of Medicine, edited by John Macleod, 1975 for presenting the children with or below standard weight and height, having their actual weights and heights through the field surveys.

The classification of the working children according to weights in the sample taken from Mirzapur indicates that only 15 working children of both sexes have standard weight and 54 of them of both the sexes have more than standard weight belonging to their respective age groups. Table 6.1 also shows that the working children of a large number (i.e. 423 of 492), constituting about 86 per cent of the total sample, are having weights below the standard norm, belonging to their respective age groups. This means that a majority of them are underweight that reflects their poor physical development.

Table 6.2 presents the distribution of working children according to their respective age-sex-wise standard heights in Mirzapur. The table indicates that there are only four children of both the sexes who possess normal height and 23 children have more than normal height. About 94 per cent of the total sample of 492 are under height, belonging to their respective age groups (this figures include both sexes).

Table 6.2 : Classification of Working Children According to Age-sex wise Standard Heights

Age (Yrs.)	Sex	No. of Working Children	Stan- dard Height (Cms.)	No. of Working Children		
				No. of Children with Standard Height	No. of Children Below Standard Height	No. of Children Above Standard Height
6	M	-	46.85	-	-	-
	F	-	46.06	-	-	-
7	M	-	48.43	-	-	-
	F	-	48.43	-	-	-
8	M	10	50.39	-	10	-
	F	3	50.00	-	3	-
9	M	12	52.76	-	12	-
	F	2	51.97	-	2	-
10	M	30	54.33	-	30	-
	F	5	54.72	-	5	-
11	M	48	56.30	2	45	1
	F	2	56.69	-	2	-
12	M	129	58.66	-	113	16
	F	7	59.06	1	6	-
13	M	230	60.63	-	224	6
	F	4	61.02	1	3	-
14	M	10	62.99	-	10	-
	F	-	62.99	-	-	-
Total		492		4	465	23

A majority of the working children having under-weight and under-height in fact present the case of their under-physical development which enfolds the kind of health they possess.

VI.2 Health Hazards

Table 6.3 presents the level of immunisation among the children (below 6 years) in the sample households.

Table 6.3 : Children Below Six Years of Age and Their Immunisation Status

Item	LEVEL OF IMMUNISATION									
	No. of Children Below 6 Years			Children Immunised			Percentage of Immu-nised Children			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
D.P.T.)			30	29	59	12.20	14.80	13.35)
Polio)			124	96	220	50.41	48.98	49.77)
) 246 196 442										
B.C.G.)			62	45	107	25.20	22.96	24.21)
Mea-sles)			37	29	66	15.04	14.80	14.93)

Discriminatory attitude of parents towards male and female children is reflected through the immunisation status of children. In absolute terms fewer females than males were immunised against various diseases. The status in percentages is slightly different. Except D.P.T. which has

lower percentage of males immunised (12.20 per cent) to total male children as compared to female children (14.80 per cent), the rest have a higher percentage of immunised males over females against them (Table 6.3). Polio drops have been given to 49.77 per cent children in the sample households. However, this percentage is recorded higher among the male children.

It has been found that about 92.47 per cent households reported sickness of their family members during the last 6 months. In this context data pertaining to centre of treatment against sickness in the sample households revealed that out of the total households reporting sickness, 88.35 per cent visited to private practitioners for treatment (Table 6.4). PHCs rank record as centres of treatment with 17.14

Table 6.4 : Illness and Centre of Treatment

Description	Number	Percentage
Sample households	492	
Households reporting sickness in the last six months	455	92.47
Centre of treatment		
(i) PHCs	78	17.14
(ii) Dispensaries	5	1.09
(iii) Private practitioners	402	88.35
(iv) ESI dispensaries	-	-
(v) District hospitals	2	0.43
(vi) Not taken treatment in above mentioned places	5	1.09
(vii) Other		

per cent accepting their services. They were followed by dispensaries and district hospitals. The respondents reported that due to ill treatment of workers in district hospitals and non-availability of medicine they do not prefer to go to hospital for treatment.

Out of 492 households, 92.47 per cent reported sickness among the family members in the last six-months (Table 6.4). Of these 99.12 per cent took allopathic medicines. Homeopathic treatment was taken by just 0.66 per cent households. Fewer still went in for Ayurvedic cure (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 : Illness and Method of Treatment in the Households

Description	Number	Percentage
Number of sample households	492	
Number of households reported sickness in the last six months	455	92.48
System of medicine availed		
(i) Allopathic	451	99.12
(ii) Ayurvedic	1	0.22
(iii) Homeopathic	3	0.66
(iv) Unani	-	-
(v) Native	-	-
(vi) Home remedies	-	-

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(iv) Unani	-	--
(v) Native	-	--
(vi) Home remedies	-	--

The health problems related to external part of the body of the working children revealed that 9.15 per cent of the children in the sample have health related problems, with a maximum number of children having cracks in the lip or mouth. Some children are also implicated with problems like dispigmented hair, bleeding gums, dental caries and ulcer of the skin or scabies. Among the above mentioned problems about 24.24 per cent of the total 45 children are suffering for dental caries. Crack in the lip is reported by 55.56 per cent of them (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6 : Health Status of the Working Children

Problems Related to Health	Working Children having Problems	
	Number	Percentage
Dispigmented hair	1	2.43
Bleeding gums	6	13.33
Dental caries	11	24.24
Crack in lip/scared mouth	25	55.56
Ulcer on skin/scabies	2	4.44
Total	45	100.00 (9.15)

Note : Figure within bracket refer to percentage of the total sample of 492 children.

In Mirzapur district more than three-fourth (75.81 per cent) of the working children in hand-made carpet industry fell prey to some kind of sickness or the other in the past 12 months from the date of the survey. Most of the sick were those who fell sick occasionally. This preponderance of sick working children is a direct consequence of overwork and inadequate nutrition in their intake. More than 19 per cent of the total working children reported that they fell ill more than 5 times during last one year (Table 6.7). There are working children who did not fall ill during the last 12 months as reported by 24.18 per cent working children (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7 : Morbidity Among Working Children During Past Twelve Months

Frequency of Sickness	Working Children	
	Number	Percentage
Fallen sick often (more than 5 times)	95	19.30
Fallen sick occasionally (less than 5 times)	278	56.52
Not fallen sick	119	24.18
Total	492	100.00

Different types of sickness were reported by the working children who fell ill during the last 12 months. The types of morbidity among the working children indicate that fever

plagues 94.36 per cent of the sick 373 children. The cause being overwork which is not supplemented by adequate nutrition (Table 6.8). As many as 21.98 per cent children complained of stomach disorder and 0.53 per cent of jaundice reflecting an improper sanitation of the work place and impure drinking water. These little carpet weavers work in dingy ill ventilated rooms where woolen/cotton strands and dust accumulate leading to cold, cough and asthma among 12.60 per cent children and in extreme cases TB (0.26 per cent). A few developed skin problems too (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8 : Type of Morbidity Among Working Children

Type of Sickness	Working Children	
	Number	Percentage in Total Children reporting Morbidity during Past 12 Months
Fever	352	94.36
Diseases related with the stomach pain, cholera, etc	82	21.98
Skin diseases	3	0.80
Jaundice	2	0.53
Small pox	-	-
Cold & cough (Asthama)	47	12.60
Polio	-	-
T.B.	1	0.26

Sickness is also reported by the working children due to working in the industry. Of the 492 child workers in the sample 4.67 per cent are sick due to the nature of work they are made to do in the industry. The environment in the work place is found unhygienic in most of the cases as a result the workers suffer from various diseases, particularly the child workers become sick.

VI.3 Social Infrastructures and Awareness

Data were collected from the working children about the facilities of education, health and welfare near their homes and work places. Most of the working children have reported that these facilities are not provided near their work places. However these facilities are available near their homes it is found that a small proportion of the child workers use them. Although 97.56 per cent of the working children reported that educational institutions are located near their homes, but these educational facilities are used by 9.76 per cent of the working children (Table 6.9). Due to poverty, the educational facilities are not used by the working children. Similarly 95.53 per cent of the working children admitted that the health facilities are provided near their homes. The proper attention is not paid by the staff of health centres. As a result, the benefits of health facilities are not reaching to the common mass. Only 9.96 per cent of the working children use the health facilities. The

Table 6.9 : Level of Facilities of Health, Education and Welfare and Their Utilisation

Description	No. of Child Workers Reporting Facilities	Percentage of Child Workers Giving Positive Answer about the utilisation
Education Facilities Provided		
(i) Near home	480	97.56
(ii) Near factory	1	0.20
Child Workers Used Education Facilities		
	48	9.76
Health Facilities Provided		
(i) Near home	470	95.53
(ii) Near factory/work place	5	1.02
Child Workers Used the Health Facilities		
	49	9.96
Welfare Facilities Provided		
(i) Near home	46	9.35
(ii) Near factory	-	-
Child Workers Use the Welfare Facilities		
	1	0.20

welfare measures for child development near their homes is reported by 9.35 per cent of the working children but these welfare measure are availed by one child worker.

The child workers in the sample have various reasons for not availing the facilities of education, health and welfare. A large number of children, 43.9 per cent, do not avail the educational facilities due to extreme poverty, which makes working essential and does not give the child time to study.

Some children do not avail the education facilities because their parents are ill or dead, they are not interested in studying, parents compel children to work, schools are far from home or lack of learning environment. Similarly 11.38 per cent of the children do not avail medical facilities because medical facilities are not available (Table 6.10). However, these facilities are available in some places but the medicine is not provided.

Table 6.10 : Reasons for Not Using the Educational, Health and Welfare Facilities

	Reasons for Not Using Facilities	Child Workers	
		Number	Percentage
1	Medicine does not give relief	30	6.10
2	Medicine not available	56	11.38
3	Due to poverty, work becomes essential	216	43.90
4	Parents are ill/dead	15	3.05
5	No child welfare programme	-	-
6	Nobody cares in Govt hospital	15	3.05
7	Not interested in studying	46	9.35
8	Parents compel to do work	14	2.85
9	Schools are too far from home	11	2.29
10	Hospitals are too far	30	6.10
11	No learning environment	99	9.96
12	Others	1	0.20

Various rehabilitation programmes are launched to eradicate the child labour and also welfare measures are taken for the protection of child labour. The government agencies and voluntary organisations are engaged in the rehabilitation of child labour. In district of Mirzapur, where the survey is conducted, the number of rehabilitation centres are very little. However, some non-government organisations have established the rehabilitation centres for children who have been removed from employment. There are about 12 such centres in Mirzapur which provide education, food and shelters to such children.

The government in its well meaning efforts has established rehabilitation centres through voluntary agencies for needy children in villages. But there appears to be gap between establishing a concrete structure and spreading the message of the facilities provided. This is evident from the handful number (8.74 per cent) of children who reported being aware of such institutions engaged in rehabilitation of child labour. This fact highlights that working children are not aware of rehabilitation programme on the one hand and there is an urgent need of rehabilitation centres in the district on the other so that the children engaged in hand-made carpet industry may be removed from the work and to rehabilitate them. The rehabilitation centres established by the voluntary organisations in the district are working very

Table 6.11 : Awareness of Rehabilitation Centres Among Working Children

Number of Child Workers	Rehabilitation Centres		Percentage of Child Workers Aware
	Aware	Unaware	
492	43	449	8.74

smoothly according to their capacity. They are not in position to cater more children in the existing infrastructure.

Among the small number of (43) children aware of the existence of rehabilitation centres in this vicinity, merely 2.33 per cent among them avail the benefits (Table 6.12). It can be said that both the government and the masses require

Table 6.12 : Utilisation of Facilities Provided by Rehabilitation Centres

Description	Child Workers	
	Number	Percentage
Facilities are being used	1	2.33
Facilities are not being used	42	97.67
Facilities were used but dropped	-	-
Total	43	100.00

concentrated efforts for a better interaction to make government schemes/programmes fruitful. Similarly, it seems that the number of such centres are not enough to see the magnitude of problem in the district.

Few child workers in the sample are aware of the facilities provided by the rehabilitation centres. About 9 per cent working children have the knowledge of facilities such as health, education, food and entertainment provided by rehabilitation centres (Table 6.13). The facilities of shelter and home in these centres is known to 4.07 per cent of the working children. It is suggested that attention should be given to establish rehabilitation centres and at the same time the child workers and their parents should be

Table 6.13 : Type of Facilities in the Rehabilitation Centres Reported by Child Workers

Type of Facilities	No. of Children Reporting the Facilities	Percentage of Child Workers Reported the Facilities
Health and medical facilities	43	8.74
Education and school	43	8.74
Shelter and home	20	4.07
Food and nutrition	43	8.74
Entertainment and recreation	43	8.74
Other facilities	43	8.74

made aware about the programmes and facilities, so that they can be motivated to join the rehabilitation centres.

As far as the level of utilisation of facilities by the working children and level of satisfaction among them from the rehabilitation centres is concerned it is found that only one child has availed the facilities provided by the rehabilitation centres and he is satisfied with the facilities.

Of the 43 working children (8.74 per cent of the total sample) were aware about the facilities extended by the rehabilitation centres, 42 did not use the facilities. Data pertaining to reasons for not using the facilities reveals

Table 6.14 : Reasons for Non-Utilization of Facilities Provided by Rehabilitation Centres

Reasons for Not Using Facilities	Child Workers	
	Number	Percentage
Not interested	2	4.76
Due to poverty and compulsion to earn money	6	14.28
No knowledge about centre	-	-
Not admitted	20	47.63
Recent opening of centres	12	28.57
Compulsion to work from the parents' side	1	2.38
Non-approachable to centre	1	2.38
Total	42	100.00

that about half (47.63 per cent) of the awared children were not admitted in these centres (Table 6.14). In some cases the centres are recently opened as reported by 28.57 per cent of the working children who are aware of the rehabilitation centres. Poverty has been one of reasons for not using the facilities, because the working children (14.28 per cent) have no alternative of earning. About 4.76 per cent of these working children are not interested in availing the facilities.

Several development programmes are initiated by the government to remove poverty and to improve the economic conditions of the poor households. The analysis of data regarding the awareness of the programmes and the level of benefits indicates that few people in our sample are aware and an even less number have been benefited from the various

Table 6.15 Awareness and Benefit of Governmental Programmes in the Sample Households

Government Programmes	Household Aware		Benefited	
	Number	Percent- age	Number	Percent- age
IRDP	278	56.50	37	13.31
TRYSEM	21	4.27	-	-
Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)	310	63.01	83	26.77
ICDS	109	22.15	1	0.92
Adult Education	229	46.54	4	1.75

programmes run by the government. Only half of the people in our sample are aware of the IRDP and of them a mere 13.31 per cent have been benefited. Awareness of the TRYSRM is known to 4.27 per cent with beneficiaries equalling zero per cent. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is known to comparatively more people than the other programmes. About 63 per cent of the people were aware of the programmes but only 26.77 per cent of them have received benefits from it. The awareness about the ICDS is found among 22.15 per cent households and only one household received benefits. It seems that adult education is futile since only 46.54 per cent are aware of the programme. Merely 1.75 per cent of the awared households have been benefited from adult education programme. Data regarding the awareness of various laws and legislative measures about labour and wage rates among the sample households reveals that very few number of households have the knowledge of these laws and acts. Most of the households in the sample are in the dark regarding labour laws. Minimum wage rate is known to only 10.37 per cent households (Table 6.16). The proportion of households is found 12.60 per cent who are aware about the accident compensation Act. Provision of Provident Fund is known to only 9.96 per cent households. The Child Labour Act is known to 39.84 per cent household (Table 6.16). The analysis suggests that the people should be made aware of various laws and acts so that they can be benefited and workers protection could be assured.

Table 6.16 : Awareness of Labour Laws Among Households

Legislation	No. of Household		Percentage	
	Aware	Not Aware	Aware	Not Aware
Minimum wages	51	441	10.37	89.63
Accident compensation	62	430	12.60	87.40
ESI	110	382	22.36	77.64
Provident fund	47	443	9.96	90.04
Child labour	196	296	39.84	60.16
Others	2	490	0.41	99.59

Data regarding the role and participation of sample household shows that the credit societies are in-effective to mobilise the financial support as it is evident from the data that a negligible proportion (0.41 per cent) of the total households are the member and they are not availing any kind of loaning facilities from these societies.

All this presents a picture about the availability of social infrastructures and awareness among the households to utilise them in their favour.

VI.4 The Main Highlights

The first implication that arises from the abuse of child labour in the carpet industry is the under-physical development of the working children. Most of them are under-

weight and under-height. However, the percentage of immunised children below 6 years of age appears to be high.

A little more than 92 per cent of the sample households reported sickness of their family members during the last six months. The households, numbered 402 of the total households reporting sickness consulted private practitioners for treatment and most of them took allopathic medicines. There were 45 working children who reported their health problem.

About 56 per cent of them reported to be suffering from crack in lip or soared mouth and 22.24 per cent of them are suffering from dental caries. The rest of them are suffering from dispigmented hair, bleeding gums and ulcer on skin or scabies.

Except 24 per cent of the total working children the rest of about 76 per cent of them fell sick often and occasionally. The 352 sick children of the total sample suffered from fever. About 35 per cent of the working children in the sample suffered from cough and cold, and the diseases related to stomach pain, cholera etc. Some of them also suffered from skin diseases, jaundice and T.B. In a way, all the working children are reported to have suffered from one disease or other.

Most of the working children were aware of availability of the social infrastructures relating to medical and health, and education. But all of them could not use them or derive

benefits from the existing social infrastructures. The reasons for non-utilisation of those infrastructural facilities were reported by many of the working children. Notable among them are the existence poverty among them, non-availability of medicine, and no interest in education. In other words, their socio-economic conditions and apathetic attitude of the concerned officials or personnel attached to the infrastructural facilities seem to be the responsible for their non-utilisation.

In Mirzapur, only 43 working children were aware of the existence of rehabilitation centres and only one among them avail of the facilities from the rehabilitation centres. Despite being aware of the different facilities available at these centres, the among causes for their non-utilisation, as reported by the 42 working children, the most notable are recent opening of the centres, poverty and their non-admissibility. In this way, all this refers to the apathy of the concerned persons of the centres in benefiting the children from their programmes which are meant for their welfare.

The Government has launched a package of anti-poverty programmes in order to improve te socio-economic lot of the poor. About 57 per cent and 63 per cent of the total households are found to be aware of the IRDP and JRY programmes respectively; but only 13.31 per cent and about 27 per cent of those aware of the IRDP and JRY programmes could benefit them respectively. Similarly, there exists a big gap

between the number of the households which are aware of other programmes and that of them actually derive benefits from them. In other words, there is a big difference between awareness among the people regarding different anti-poverty programmes and the benefits actually they get from them.

Data regarding the awareness of various laws and legislative measures regarding labour and wages among the sample households reveals that very few number of the sample households have knowledge of these laws and measures. For instance, the minimum wage rate is known to 10.37 per cent, P.F. Act to about 10 per cent, Child Labour Act about to 40 per cent, Accident Compensation to 13 per cent and ESI to 22 per cent of the total sample households. All this presents a pitiable picture not only about the awareness of these laws, measures and programmes among the households and people in Mirzapur but also the apathetic role of beaurocracy and the government in the present democratic set-up of the state and society.

CHAPTER VII

Legal Status and Aspects of Child Labour

(Child Labour Policy)

Children are universally recognised as the most important asset and the future hope of the society. A society's civilization is measured on how it protects and cares for its children. It is well-known fact that numerous child labourers who work to augment their family income are exploited and victimised. To develop the physical and mental potentials among the children is the key factor in the strategy of human resource development. Historically, the institutions of child workers has existed since time immemorial, children have been helping and working with their parents and with their elders. The work performed by children working as child labour is usually classified as (a) paid, or (b) unpaid. Wage employment for children is offered in most cases by relatively small industrial units, almost always located in the unorganised sector. The productive activities of household work done by children, are generally, unpaid. The salient features of child labour can be figured as (i) the number of children working as child labour is growing; (ii) the bulk of child labour is employed in the unorganised sector; and (iii) children are made to work in much hazardous occupations.

The report IV(I) of 57th Session of International Labour Conference, Geneva, 1972 indicated that 90 per cent or more of the child population is engaged in the employment market in the developing regions of the world. The report has also indicated that 41,125000 children making 5.1 per cent of the whole of 0-14 years age group were engaged in 1960, and in 1970, the number was reduced to 39,975000 which formed 4 per cent of all children.

To protect the interest of the children, the International Labour Organisation has adopted many conventions and recommendations regarding the minimum age for entrance into the employment, night work by young persons and their medical examination. There have been several other efforts to tackle the child labour problem and the eradication of child labour. The Twenty-third Session of the International Labour Conference, 1937, had adopted a convention in which a special article for India was inserted, fixing the minimum age at which children be employed or may work in certain occupation. The United Nations General Assembly adopted on the 21st December, 1976, the Resolution 31/169 proclaiming the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child. The objective behind this Resolution was to create world-wide consciousness towards promoting the well-being of children, draw attention to their special needs and encouraging national action on behalf of children, particularly, for the least privileged and those who were at work. The decision of United Nations to observe 1979 as the

International Year of Child has once again focussed world attention on the problem of child labour.

The International Labour Organisation has made several conventions to safeguard the interest of the children by fixing the minimum age for child employment. Some of the main conventions are the following :

1. The Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919.
2. The Minimum Age (Agricultural) Convention, 1921.
3. The Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stockers) Convention, 1921.
4. The Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention, 1932.
5. The Minimum Age (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1937.
6. The Minimum Age (Fisherman) Convention, 1959.
7. The Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965.
8. The Minimum Age Convention, 1973.

The conventions related to medical examination of the child workers :

1. The Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921.
2. The Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946.

Conventions related to night work of the children:

1. Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1919.
2. Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948.

In our country, the history of legal protection to the child labour through enactments is started more than 100 years back. The first Protective Legislation for Child Labour was enacted in 1881. The Act known as the Indian Factories Act of 1881. In 1891, the Indian Factories Act was enacted on the recommendations of a Factory Commission which was appointed by the Government of India in 1890. Under the Act of 1891, the lower age was extended from 7 to 9 years. The upper age was also extended from 12 to 14 years. The children were not allowed to work at night. In 1901, Mines Act was passed, which prohibited the employment of children under 12 years of age. The Factories Act of 1911 reduced the working hours of children in factories to 6 hours a day.

Next step in the history of child labour law was the Indian Factories (Amendments) Act of 1922 which was enacted to give effect to International Labour Conventions on the minimum age of admission of children to employment. The Indian Factory Act of 1911 was further amended in 1926 for some administrative purposes.

In 1931, again the Indian Factories Act of 1911 was further amended to bring certain minor changes for administrative purpose. In the same year the Indian Ports (amendment) Act, 1931 prescribed a minimum age of 12 years for the employment of children in the handling of goods in ports. In 1935, Indian Mines (amendment) Act, 1935 regulated the working conditions and hours of work in mines. This amendment prohibited the employment of children under 15

years in mines. Subsequent acts regulated the employment of children in specific sectors of the economy in each instance imposing a minimum age for child employment. The Employment of Children Act (1938) was the first Act devoted entirely to child labour.

After Independence, the first step regarding the employment of children was the amendment of the Factories Act, in 1948 which raised the minimum age for entering into employment in Factories, to 14 years. The ILO convention relating to night work of young persons was responsible for an amendment in 1951 in the Employment of Children Act which prohibits the employment of children below 15 and 17 years at night in Railway and Ports. The employers were required to maintain register for children under 17 years. In 1951, Plantation Labour Act was passed in order to prevent the employment of children under 12 years in plantation. The Indian Mines Act was enacted in 1952 which prohibits the employment of children under 15 years in mines.

There are certain provisions in our Constitution which protect the children against their exploitation. The Constitutional provisions relating to children are as follows :

Article 15(3) of the Constitution lays down that "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children".

Article 24 provides that "No child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in other hazardous employment".

The following major legislative enactments which provide legal protection to children in various occupations, these are :

1. Factories Act, 1948
2. Mines Act, 1952
3. Plantation Labour Act, 1951
4. Merchant Shipping Act, 1958
5. Motor Transport Works Act, 1961
6. Dock Workers' Regulation and Employment Act, 1948
7. Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933
8. Employment of Children Act, 1938
9. Apprentices Act, 1961
10. Bidi and Cigar Works (conditions of employment) Act, 1966
11. Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970
12. Radiation Protection Rules, 1971 - Under the Atomic Energy Act, 1962
13. Shops and Commercial Establishment Acts Under different nomenclatures in States.
14. The Child Labour (Provision and Regulation) Act, 1986

The Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, which had prepared a National Plan of Action for the International Year of the Child has started the following

programme regarding child labour. "All State Governments and Union Territories should be requested to adopt a comprehensive piece of legislation to protect the health, safety and welfare of working children below the age of 18 years, such a legislation may cover working hours and conditions, rest, pause, wages, leave, health, education, prevention of cruelty, hazards to and exploitation of children in employment or under apprenticeship training".

The main thrust of the Indian laws and International Labour Organisation Conventions regarding the employment of children have been on three matters: (i) Minimum age; (ii) Medical examination; and (iii) Night work.

VII.1 The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibits the employment of children in certain occupations and processes and regulate the conditions of work of children in certain other occupations. The content of the Act is divided into the following parts :

- Part I : Preliminary
- Part II : Prohibition of employment of children in certain occupations and processes
- Part III : Regulation of conditions of work of children
- Part IV : Miscellaneous

The Child Labour Act 1986, has its two main important contents :

VII.1.1 Prohibition of Employment of Children in Certain Occupations and Processes

1. The main occupations in which the child employment is prohibited

No child shall be employed or permitted to work in any of the occupations connected with :

- (a) Transport of passengers, goods or mails by railways;
- (b) Cinder picking, cleaning of an ash pit or building operation in the railway premises;
- (c) Work in a catering establishment at a railway station, involving the movement of a vendor or any other employees of the establishment from one platform, to another or into or out of a moving train;
- (d) Work relating to the construction of a railway station or with any other work where such work is done in close proximity to or between the railway lines;
- (e) A port authority within the limits of any port.

2. Child Employment is Prohibited in the following Processes

- (a) Bidi-making
- (b) Carpet weaving
- (c) Cement manufacturing (including bagging of cement)
- (d) Cloth printing, dyeing and weaving
- (e) Manufacture of matches, explosives and fireworks
- (f) Mica-cutting and splitting
- (g) Shellac manufacture
- (h) Soap manufacture
- (i) Tanning
- (j) Wool-cleaning
- (k) Building and construction industry

VII.1.2 Regulation and Conditions of Work of Children

The provisions of regulation of conditions of work of children shall apply to an establishment or a class of establishments in which none of the occupations or processes classified as prohibition of employment of children.

- (i) No child shall be required or permitted to work in any establishment in excess of such number of hours as may be prescribed for such establishment or class of establishments.
- (ii) The period of work on each day shall be so fixed that no period shall exceed hours and that no child shall work for more than three hours before he has had an interval for rest for at least one hour.
- (iii) The period of a child shall be so arranged that inclusive of his interval for rest under sub-section (2) it shall not be spread over more than six hours including the time spent in waiting for work on any day.
- (iv) No child shall be permitted or required to work between 7 p.m. and 8 a.m.
- (v) No child shall be required or permitted to work overtime.
- (vi) No child shall be required or permitted to work in any establishment in any day on which he has already been working in another establishment.

(vii) If any question arises between an Inspector and an occupier on to the age of any child who is employed or is permitted to work by him in an establishment, the question shall, in the absence of a certificate as to the age of such child granted by the prescribed medical authority, be referred by the Inspector for decision to the prescribed medical authority.

(viii) There shall be maintained by every occupier in respect of children employed or permitted to work in any establishment a register to be available for inspection by an Inspector at all times during working hours or when work is being carried on in any such establishment, showing :

- (a) the name and date of birth of every child so employed or permitted to work;
- (b) hours and periods of work of any such child and the intervals of rest to which he is entitled;
- (c) the nature of work of any child; and
- (d) such other particulars as may be prescribed.

(ix) The appropriate government may by notification in the official Gazette, make rules for the health and safety of the children employed or permitted to work to any establishment or class of establishments.

(x) Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions, the said rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely :

- (a) cleanliness in the place of work and its freedom from nuisance;

- (b) disposal of wastes and effluents;
- (c) ventilation and temperature;
- (d) dust and fume;
- (e) artificial humidification;
- (f) lighting;
- (g) drinking water;
- (h) latrine and urinals;
- (i) spittoons;
- (j) fencing of machinery;
- (k) work at or near machinery in motion;
- (l) employment of children in dangerous machines;
- (m) instructions, training and supervision in relation to employment of children on dangerous machines;
- (n) device of cutting off power;
- (o) self-acting machines;
- (p) easing of new machinery;
- (q) floor, stairs and means of access;
- (r) pits, sumps, openings in floors, etc;
- (s) excessive weights;
- (t) protection of eyes;
- (u) explosive or inflammable dust, gas, etc;
- (v) precautions in case of fire;
- (w) maintenance of buildings; and
- (x) safety of buildings and machinery.

Despite the various laws and legislative measures are made regarding the ban on employment of children, still the magnitude of child labour seems increasing in the

hazardous occupations. Whatever the factors responsible for child employment in the Indian labour market, it is true that the employment of children in the hazardous establishments is an act of violation of the Child Labour Act, 1986 and it is illegal from the point of view of rules under the Act.

VII.2 The Legal Status of Child in Carpet Industry

Although the Child Labour Act of 1986 prohibits the employment of child labour in carpet weaving, yet a sizeable number of children work in that industry. Moreover Article (24) of the Indian Constitution also prohibits the employment of child labour in any factory or mine or other hazardous occupations. Therefore, it is a stigma or slur on the part of the society which proclaims to be civilised and cultured.

It is shown in the fifth chapter of this study that most of those who are engaged in the carpet industry, are not aware of the existing labour laws and other legislative measures that are meant for their social protection and welfare. Their illiteracy and socio-economic compulsion make them ignorant of those laws and measures and the ruling elites harvest their own plants to reap the fruits from their ignorance and socio-economic compulsions.

The merchant capital dominated household form of production in the industry is the most vital obstacle that comes on the way to releasing the children from the clutch of

the so-called merchants-cum-manufacturers. The reason is that carpets are manufactured by weavers at homes, not by employing them in factories or workshops or sheds on a given space. As a result, this industry is not covered under the Factories Act of 1948 and the manufacturers are made free from labour laws and other acts concerning employees. Such informal arrangements succeed in exploiting the existing socio-economic situation in favour of the merchants-cum-manufacturers. The households have to continue the employment of their child labour in the carpet industry, that too, in the conditions in which they don't have any other alternatives for their subsistence existence.

The state has introduced certain legislative measures to curb out the use and abuse of child labour in the carpet industry. But the organisational structure of its bureaucratic machinery does not have that social orientation and commitment which could arouse consciousness among the concerned people to protect themselves from the wheel of exploitation. On the contrary, such machinery functions on the dictates of the ruling classes and interests, despite showing concern about the weavers/artisans at the legislative level.

The state is much more concerned with revenue than with child labour, so far the carpet industry is concerned. Hence the industry continues to be cottage-based but under the control of merchants who extract carpets manufactured by the weavers and realise their exchange value in the home and

foreign markets. In this way, revenue through sale tax and excise duty and foreign earnings through export are generated by the state. Therefore, the dubious policy approach of the state to retain its cottage-based character on the one hand and on the other, to promote export without changing the present form of production in the industry, is by itself responsible for the use of child labour, given the socio-economic structure of society in the district, or for that in the country in general.

What all this shows is that the working children in the carpet industry do not enjoy legal protection nor the effects of welfare and rehabilitation programmes reach them. Hence a fresh look for the problem of child labour in the industry is required with strong will and determination to release the child labour from the bondage of work or to rehabilitate the children with full protection and development.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusions and Suggestions

Legal protection to child labour through various enactments has been given in our country. Of late, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 is one of the efforts to prohibit the child employment in the hazardous occupations. But still the magnitude of child employment has not been reduced. To find out the reasons for this continuing menace, the study on child labour was carried out in district Mirzapur (U.P.) among the working children engaged in hand made carpet weaving industry. The study is based on the detailed survey of 492 children employed in hand made carpet weaving process and the 492 households of these working children. Apart from working children and their families, we have also surveyed 20 units of hand made carpet industry.

The main focus of the study was to examine the socio-economic background of families in terms of family size, literacy level, occupational pattern and mobility, income levels, contribution of income earned by the working children, attitude of parents towards children, etc. from where the child labour originates. The characteristics of working children, i.e., age, education, skill, training, working condition, wage rate, health condition and attitude and perception of working children towards work have been analysed. In this process, why the households supply their

child labour for wages in the carpet industry; how and why the child labour is used in the carpet industry; what are the implications of abuse of child labour on the physical development and health of the working children; and to what extent they are socially and legally protected, are some of the questions which are also examined in the study.

The study found that there are around six members per household with the same being 621 females per thousand males. The literacy level of the sample population is very low. Around 82 per cent of the population and 76 per cent of the heads of households are illiterate. Most of the heads of households as well as children in our sample, are continuing either their father's or grandfather's occupation. In addition there is a preponderance of skilled child workers in our sample. A majority of the households own their houses and are non-migrants. The sample population works mostly in the manufacturing, processing, repairs etc. sector. The per household monthly income is around Rs.1152/- and 14 per cent of the households are in debt. This low level of income has forced a lot of children to discontinue their education.

Our country has the dubious distinction of having a very large concentration of working children. If poverty is degrading and dehumanising indeed this is no where more manifest than in the sorry plight of these millions of children left to tend for themselves in a hostile and

apathetic world. Child labour is an inescapable fall out of the household form of production under the dominance of merchants and their capital which is being reproduced in a given socio-economic system.

Child workers are particularly vulnerable to exploitation because they have very little say in choosing their occupations or deciding their working conditions. They have no rights as workers, nor can they join labour unions. Consequently they work for petty wages in deplorable conditions.¹ No well meaning legislation on the part of the government has made any difference to their plight. And sincere efforts of the voluntary agencies with their meagre resources, are but a drop in the ocean.

In our sample most of the children belong to the 7-14 years age group. According to reports in newspapers and magazines, in the carpet weaving industry of Mirzapur about 1.5 lakh children slog from dusk to dawn to weave these magian patterns which adorn the rooms of the rich. The UNICEF reports put this figure at 500000 children below the age of five and 900000 children in the 5-15 years age group.²

In our sample 37.63 per cent of the population belong to scheduled castes and about 46 per cent belong to the backward castes. Surveys by the Bhandhua Mukti Morcha have clearly established that a large number of children employed by the loom owners in the 400 year old Mirzapur carpet industry in U.P. are from the Palamau district of Bihar.³ They are

tribals impoverished by deforestation, displacement by development projects and by environment degradation.

Another fact which emerges from our study is that the children come from extremely poor families. This can be seen from the consumption pattern (main item of consumption being wheat with very little spent on dal and oil) and saving pattern (savings are nil). Further 96.88 per cent children come to work as their families need supplementary income. Poverty is considered to be the main reason for the parents to force their children to work and supplement the family income. One notices a vicious circle here. Employers have a vested interest in the low paid child labourers. The schooling system has a single entry point (Class I, age 6) and teaching by full time professional teachers ensures that it is accessible only to families that are not compelled to utilise the services of their children at home and during the day to supplement the meagre income of adults. Those few who enter school at the age of 6 are compelled to drop-out at the primary level and begin to work.⁴

As follows from above, in our sample 76 per cent of the children are illiterate while 20 per cent dropped-out at the primary level. The school, by its very structure includes children from weaker sections. Apart from their literacy status, class and caste based studies have confirmed the link between illiteracy, caste and child labour.⁵

Another fact which emerges from the study of our sample is that most of the children are made to work long hours. Most of them work between 6-10 hours a day. Within the carpet weaving industry there are two separate categories of working children. There are those who are part of a family workers. They participate at different stages of the carpet weaving processes, much as the children do in the handloom industry throughout India. Of the total children working in the carpet weaving industry of Mirzapur eighty per cent are engaged in weaving while the rest are engaged in sorting cutting.⁶

Further these children are paid very little for their work. On an average each child in our sample gets Rs.10/- a day and 68 per cent of the children get below Rs.10/-. A quarter of the children who get Rs.10/- a day are mostly children of original carpet producers who joined the work force initially as apprentices. A large number of children are paid virtually nothing for their labour. Most of the children, considered as under training are given just two meals in a day.⁷ About 12 per cent of the children in our sample work as apprentices. Even after apprenticeship, these children earn at the most Rs.6/- for more than 10 hours a day. The carpet manufacturers have a vested interest in employing low paid child labourers. This keeps the cost of production of carpets down, and the profits high.

It is very distressing to note that the children in our sample work in inhuman conditions. The working environment

is unhygienic and only 15 per cent of them have been immunised against various diseases. About 93 per cent of the households have reported sickness during the last six months. The working children have disfigmented hair, bleeding gums, dental caries, scabies and cracks in the lip. Some have even reported sickness due to working in the weaving process. This is a result of breathing in badly ventilated rooms which make it difficult for them to undertake any other job once they shift out of carpet work. One study indicates that long hours of work, late hours of night employment, continuous strain or even muscular deformity.⁸

As can be seen from the statistics collected, that although the government runs programmes and rehabilitation centres for the welfare of these children, the level of utilisation of these facilities is low. This could be due to the illiteracy and ignorance of the child workers. That is why the employers of these children get away with a lot of injustice.

While the misery of these children has not diminished, the profits of the carpet weaving industry have grown rapidly. In 1987 there was a 40 per cent increase in carpet exports fetching the country over 400 crores. At one stage India had become the leading exporter of carpets. However, despite the BMMs intervention, the Carpet Promotion Export Council (CPEC) continues to insist that its members do not directly use child labour and that the children who work on

the looms are part of the families of weavers. It also insists that it has no control over individual loom-owners to whom the work is farmed out by the carpet manufacturing companies.⁹ This in fact, reflects the basic characteristics of the household form of production in the industry, being under the control of merchants.

The vested interest in employing the children would become much more apparent if one were to study the working conditions of the children and the high profits involved. Traditionally the children of carpet manufacturers entered the work as apprentices. With carpets becoming a major foreign exchange earner, and exporters receiving a major government subsidy, the manufacture of carpets began to be controlled by the merchants-cum-exporters, also called manufacturers. The merchant dominated house form of production in the carpet industry couple with the social reproduction of poverty is the real cause of the use and abuse of child labour. The state patronage to the so-called merchants and manufacturers in the name of export promotion and promoting it as a cottage. The industry has strengthened the hold of merchants over the weaving process of carpets at the household level. Therefore, the state has to make a choice between retaining the same form of production without merchants' control and transforming the present informal status of the industry into formal one. In both cases, the children must enjoy the right to education and their right must be held as the duty of the state to realise into actual

social life. At the same time, the socio-economic conditions of the households which supply child labour, should also be improved.

VIII.1 Suggestions

The issue of child labour problem is not so simple. The existence of child labour is a complex reality, inextricably linked with poverty and under-development. It is a symptom, not the disease. Yet it, cannot be neglected just because the larger problems of removing poverty and illiteracy are far more intractable. It needs to be ensured that workable solutions are devised to phase out child labour.

The legislative measures taken by the Indian Government to reduce child labour are as follows. The Constitution of India prohibited the employment of children below 14 in factories and hazardous occupations, and although a number of legislative acts covering or focussing specially on child labour had been enacted at both national and state levels the government was convinced that unless poverty was completely alleviated, there was nothing that could be done to prohibit child labour. It was felt that the goal of public policy should be shifted from abolition of child labour to providing increased protection to child workers and gradually reducing the incidence of child labour. As it became evident that a change in public policy was imminent, criticisms began proving in from several quarters that this amounted to a

betrayal of the objectives of the Constitution, and a possible violation of the legislative provisions.¹⁰

The ensuing controversy resulted in efforts for the formulation and enactment of new legislation. Considering these factors, the Government of India came out with three different measures.

The first involved dealing with the legal problems which created obstacles to governmental action against the problems. This resulted in the enactment of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986.¹¹ The second measure taken by the government was the formulation of National Policy on child labour. The policy was expected to deal with the socio-economic factors affecting child labour and to provide a framework therein. The policy's major thrust was on non-formal education. It envisaged the provision of free and compulsory education to all children upto the age of 14 by 1995. In areas with a high incidence of child labour employment and income generating schemes were also intensified under the policy.

The third measure was the identification of areas of research for initiating a national programme for welfare of employed children. For this the National Policy on Child Labour specified ten project areas with a high concentration of labour force. The strategy was to develop model programmes, comprising a number of key elements : stepping up the enforcement of the law on the prohibition of child

labour, coverage families of child workers in income and employment generating schemes, expansion of formal and non-formal education and the promotion of school enrolment through various inducements. However, nothing constructive has been done yet in any of the identified areas.¹²

In spite of all these measures, the problem of child labour continues unabated in India largely because of the gap between policies and legislation, on one hand, and the implementation of legislation on the other. And such gap may continue in future also, if a clear-cut policy direction and efforts to prevent children from entering the labour market are not made. The civil rights and liberty call for the liberation of child labour from the bondage of work for wages.

The children must enjoy education as a fundamental right and it should be the Constitutional duty of the state to translate this right into actual. Therefore, the parents should be prevented from sending their children to work and they should be also economically protected by the state. Mill said "It still remains unrecognised, that to bring a child into existence without a fair prospect of being able, not only to provide food for its body, but instruction and training for its mind, is a moral crime, both against the unfortunate offspring and against society; and that if the parent does not fulfill this obligation, the State ought to see it fulfilled, at the charge, as far as possible, of the parent."¹³

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